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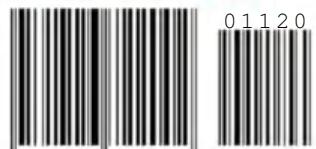
CANNONDALE'S
FAST & FUN
HABIT
P. 91

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RIDERS REVEAL
THE SECRETS
OF TRUE GRIT!



P.10



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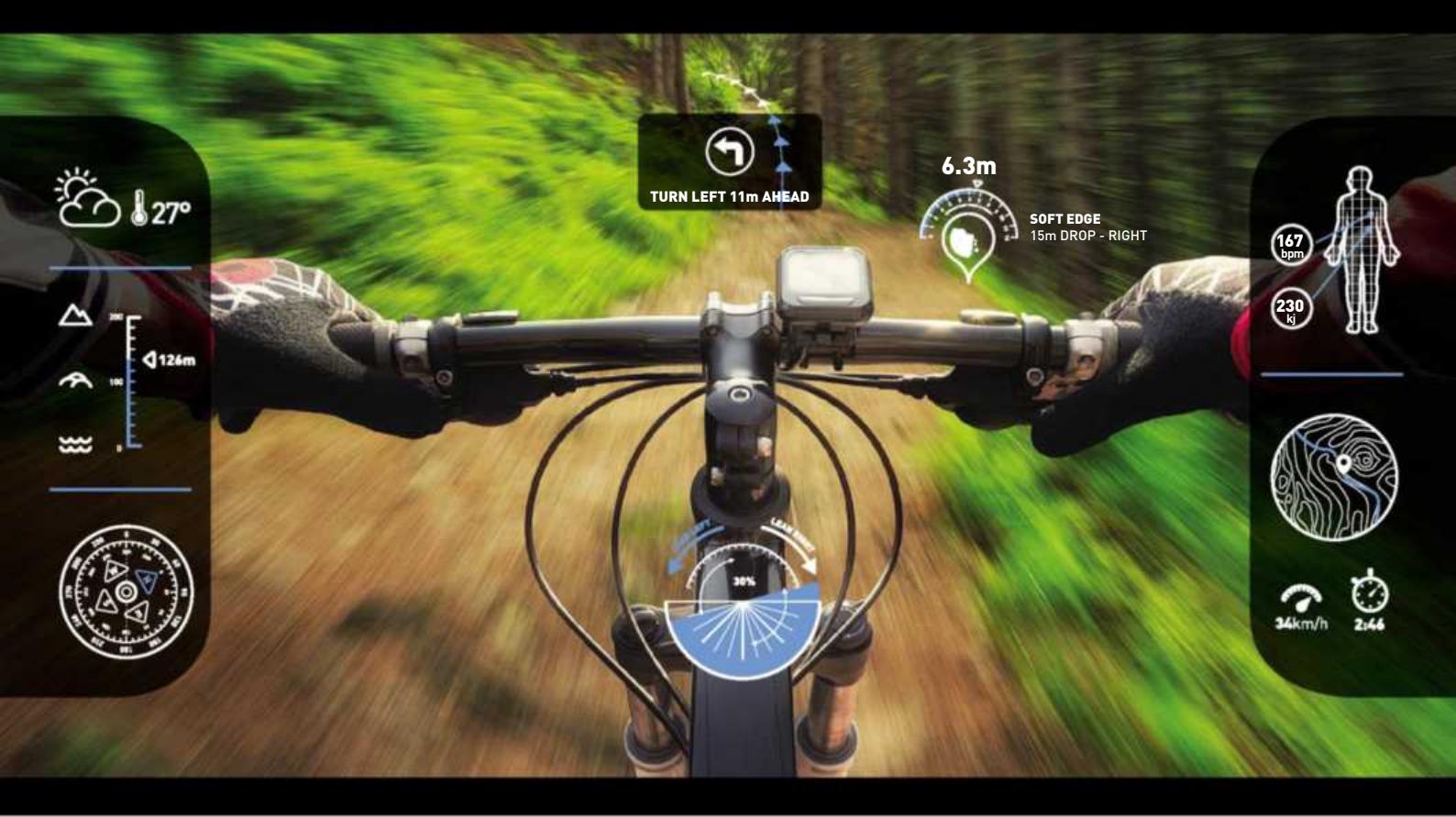
P.36

GET
UP A HILL
FAST!

P.25

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YEARS
LONGER!

P.25



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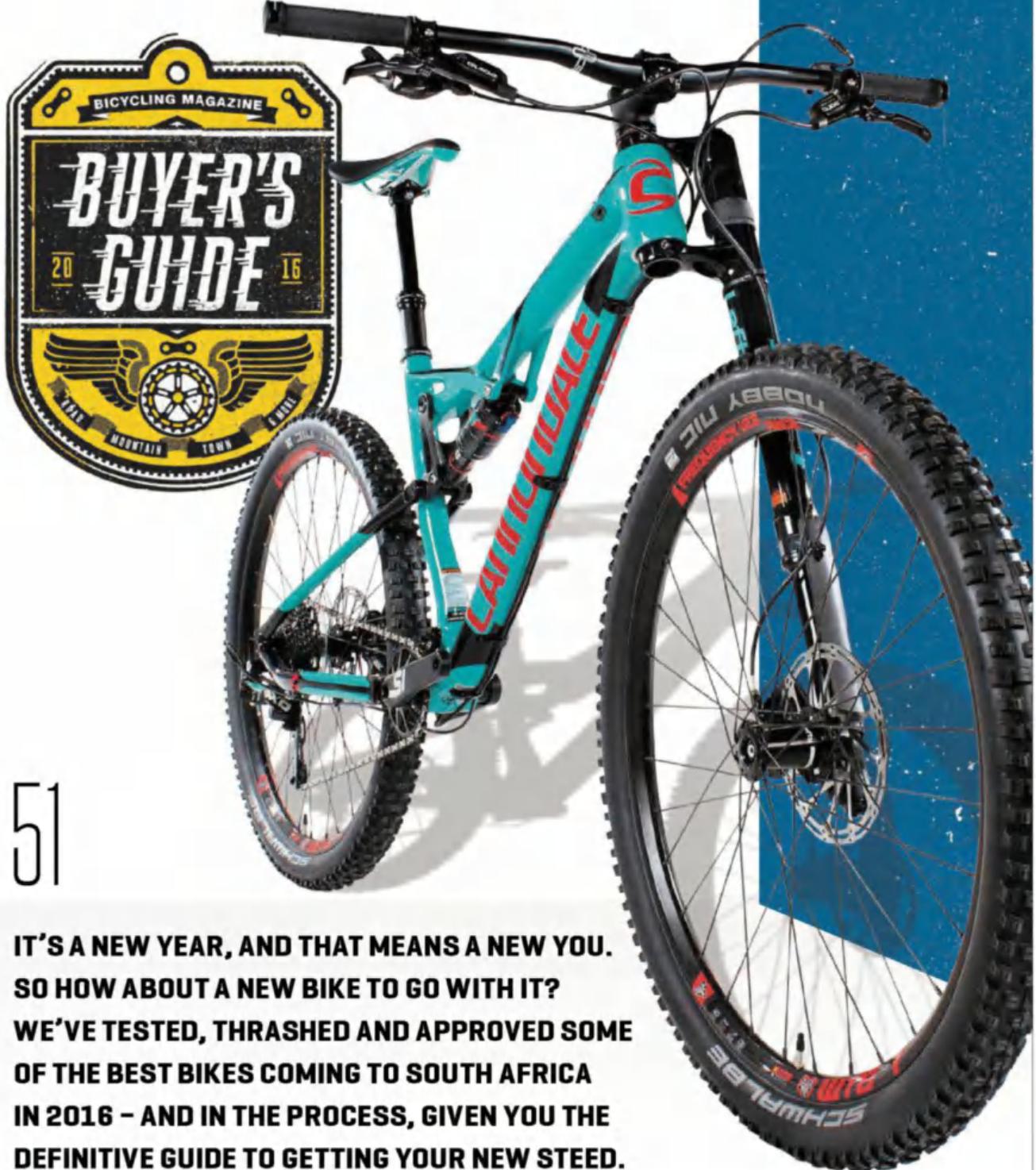


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INSIDE

FEATURE

45 | #HTFU

Three of the toughest riders in SA cycling share their war stories – and show us how you can do what it takes to harden up.

By Jonathan Aincer

45



KNOW HOW

18 | BUZZ

How #Moonlightmass met its end

23 | ASK BICYCLING

Find out how to earn more KOMs

26 | THE FETISH

Golden pedals to bling your ride

30 | IN MY VIEW

Cherise Stander's big miracle

32 | EAT

The power of pistachios

34 | THE SCIENTIST

Your choice of crank could be fatiguing you

36 | THE COACH

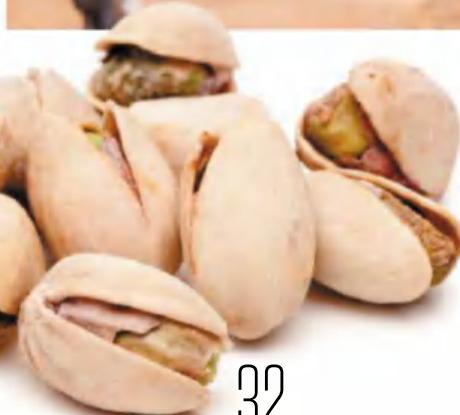
What's the best energy drink for cyclists?

38 | SKILLS

5 tips to make riding on gravel easy

42 | MY BIKE

Matteo Conti's 1976 Bianchi Sprint 76



32



28



26

REGULARS

14 | Rants & Raves

16 | Editor's Letter

28 | Rider2Rider

28 | StyleMan

40 | Freewheelin'

95 | Featured Race

96 | Race Diary

97 | Recommended Races

98 | The Frame



ONE EDITION, TWO COVERS

Choose between SwiftCarbon's pro tour-ready Hypervox (left) and the trail-ready Cannondale Habit (right) in this month's special Bike Buyer's Guide edition of *Bicycling SA*.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES GARAGHTY

A BIKE COMPANY FOR ALL



Specialized and racing are synonymous. We offer the most technologically advanced race bikes on the planet, giving our athletes, and you, the best chance to perform at your peak. Here in South Africa we believe that while racing is an invaluable element of our business, there is more to the Big S than the battle for rainbow stripes or the Cape Epic leader's jersey. We are a bike company for all.

ALL IN

No matter their ability or level of experience all members of our team are encouraged to ride as much as possible. Whether it's an early morning road ride before work, the weekly Wednesday lunchtime MTB ride or even the Tuesday/Thursday Crossfit gym session, an active lifestyle is a core element at Specialized.





GIRL POWER

Together with Chantelle and Kristy from our Stellenbosch office, Marketing Manager Bianca Grobbelaar has spearheaded a campaign to create a confidence-inspiring environment where girls can learn more about riding, become better mechanics as well as improve their training. During August's 'Women's Month' over 100 one-on-one sessions were held nationwide to encourage more girls to ride more regularly.



ALL FOR ONE, ONE FOR ALL

Over the past four years, Specialized has grown to employ 28 passionate individuals nationally. We are incredibly proud that not one of them has left the family. We strive to allow employees to grow, building their skill-set within the business, much like Harry Orr who has held positions in four departments since joining the team in 2011.

WE EAT, SLEEP & BREATHE BIKES

As the saying goes, giving is better than receiving. Our Events Coordinator & SBCU Instructor, Tiaan van der Merwe spends most weekends coaching and mentoring aspiring kids, aged between 5 and 16, on the trails surrounding Stellenbosch and Paarl. What motivates him is witnessing the raw passion these young guns have for cycling and the outdoors. As van der Merwe says, 'at their age, it's not about who is the fastest or riding with the latest gear, but purely about the stoke'. Thank you Tiaan, and all of our staff for your passion and dedication.



THE BIGGER PICTURE

As they carve through G-Spot's singletrack or tear up the BMX track in Kayamandi, the sparkle you see in each and every one of the Songo.info kids is magical. With General Manager Kathy Crabbe working from our Stellenbosch offices, we are proud and honoured to play a meaningful role in the lives of these rising stars.



WEAPON IN THE WORKSHOP

In his professional career, former SA Road Captain Rupert Rheeder was a larger than life character, ruling the road with fierce determination. As suspension service manager, Rupert harnesses his flaming energy making sure your suspension leaves the stand in tip-top shape. Each and every time. He and Adrian Maaske (currently head of Operations and himself a former professional on the road) have been friends for over 20 years, 7 of which have been working together at Specialized.



Photo credit: Michael Cerveny

FINDING YOU THE BEST TOOL FOR THE JOB

Specialized strives to partner with existing stores that offer the absolute best in product, service and advice. With many years of experience and a former back-up rider to Kulharvy and Sauer in the Cape Epic nogaL, Nico Bell owner of Bells Cycling in Nelspruit is passionate about finding you the best tool for the job. Whether it's a Camber EVO, Diverge gravel grinder or pair of 2FO shoes, independent retail partners, like Nico will point you in the right direction.

THE HOLY TRAIL

Director Bobby Behan finds it impossible to hide his enthusiasm for trail riding. In his personal capacity, he has spearheaded the rejuvenation of Jonkershoek's trail network by setting up and managing a trail-building fund that is supported by MTO Forestry with the implicit goal of creating a single-track playground for all mountain bikers. Two fulltime trail builders, Bennet Nel from Jonkershoek and Hylton Turvey from Karkloof, are part of our ambassador program. Both work tirelessly to maintain and expand the trail networks for their respective communities in KZN, Western Cape and Gauteng.



TOGETHER, WE ARE



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REPRODUCTION MEDIA 24 REPRO

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PROJECT DUNERIDERS

IMAGE BY CRAIG KOLESKY

As photographers, we're constantly on the lookout for new concepts and themes to photograph. This project took months of planning. The idea was to take two athletes from totally different sports, and put them together in an unknown environment. And that's how we got *Bicycling* Gear Editor Oli Munnik and freeride skier Fabio Studer to pin it together down a massive sand dune on the Skeleton Coast.

WHERE Skeleton Coast, Namibia

WHEN 8 October 2015

METADATA Nikon D4s, Lens 24-70mm, ISO 400

WATCH THE VIDEO www.redbullphotography.com/projects/duneriders

DOWNLOAD AS A WALLPAPER BICYCLING.CO.ZA/WALLPAPERS



THE INBOX

ON THE MONEY

Dave Moseley hit the nail on the head with his story 'SA needs commutement' (*Bicycling, October 2015*). Most people using a minibus taxi to commute wouldn't consider using a bicycle. My work colleagues feel safer in a taxi, while many South Africans feel that cycling is dangerous. We need safer roads and more considerate motorists. We all need to be more patient and considerate. Then and only then can we hope to change the mindset. – MATT HAWKINS

WIN!

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KNOX'S 12-MONTH STATS (18 NOV 2014 TO 18 NOV 2015)

RIDES 159

DISTANCE 9 155.7km

TIME IN THE SADDLE 363 hours

ELEVATION GAIN 161 083m

ALL-TIME BIGGEST RIDE 229km

BIGGEST CLIMB 1 088m

FEATURED STRAVA RIDE: SABIE LOOP

The route starts at the origin of Sabie Road (R537), into a 12km climb and continues on Harmony Hill for 1.8km before a descent on Spitzkop. It follows Sabie Rd until the Recoleta Estate turn-off, then dips and climbs for 8km, coming out on Drakensberg St – then carries on to Danie Joubert St and detours to Sabie, back to the start.



Total Distance	► 103km
Time	► 4:13:08
Elevation	► 1829m
Top Speed	► 65.2km/h
Average Power Output	► 135W

TOP RESULTS OF SEGMENTS

Rocoletto descent T to Tar 5th overall (14:56)

R40 Climb 5th overall (4:47)

Broken Pipe Hill 10th overall on (3:07)



FACEBOOK FEEDBACK

DESCRIBE TO US, IN PAINSTAKING DETAIL AND IN SLOW-MOTION, YOUR LAST SPECTACULAR WIPEOUT...

I jumped a rock, forgetting that I was riding a new, lighter bike. I misjudged my landing and came down on a small boulder, which sent me flying like Superman over the bars. I hit my head, putting an 8cm crack in my helmet, and came to a stop against a tree with my shoulder, which still has the bark pattern as a tattoo.
– Dewald van Staden

A simple manual through a river slammed me over the bars as the rear wheel sunk into a bog. I flipped scorpion-style into a face plant. Fortunately, I saved my face with a speedy plank pose, feet still clipped in the bike. – Myles Kelsey

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The Beauty of the Bike

OUR 2016 BIKE BUYER'S GUIDE IS OUR BIGGEST YET – CONTACT YOUR BANK MANAGER NOW.

A

AT BICYCLING MAGAZINE WE REALLY LOVE BIKES.

LIKE, REALLY! When our gear editor Oliver Munnik walks in with a new bike, everything stops, and eyes suddenly appear above computer screens. An instant crowd gathers around the new steed, touching, lifting and tapping the frame.

That's why we battled to figure out which bikes we should include in our biggest-ever Bike Buyer's Guide this month. In this issue we've gone big, and devoted almost half the magazine to the latest and best road and mountain bikes available in South Africa.

There were so many contenders for the cover that we considered printing eight different versions – but our sensible publishing team, who look at numbers (sadly), decided it would be too expensive.

So we compromised, and now we have two different January covers: one a mountain bike and the other a road bike, just to make sure no-one's excluded.

After much wrangling and

terrain, while still being a more than capable climber, while the Hypervox is Swift's latest, aero version of a road bike that has received widespread acclaim for its race-like geometry and sublime handling (I should know, I own one!).

Unfortunately, the first loser in this big debate was local bespoke bike-maker Dave Mercer. It was a close call between the Mercer and the Swift as to which bike would make the final selection.

Mercer's hand-built steel frame bikes are things of great beauty, and built by a man who sees bikes simply as a passion, and not a business. But the Swift just edged it – purely because Mercer's frames are comparatively difficult to come by.

And finally, a word (and some motivation for getting your next bike) from the Velominati, the legendary makers of cycling rules. Rule #12: The correct number of bikes to own is $n+1$. While the *minimum* number of bikes one should



5 BEST BIKE-BUYING TIPS

1 CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON. Road or mountain? Competitive or chilled? Budget or premium? Set down your parameters as a starting point.

2 SPREADSHEET IT. Call it OCD, but putting all the options on a spreadsheet and comparing them will help a lot in making the right decision.

3 RIDE WHAT YOUR FRIENDS RIDE. Most of your mates enjoy long mountain-bike rides? Buy a 29er, so you can enjoy riding with them.

4 GET THE RIGHT FIT. Go to a bike shop that gives you a proper fit and get the right bike. Never compromise on this. The wrong-size bike will never fit properly, no matter how much you tinker with it.

5 GET A GIRL'S BIKE. There are so many options for women now, there's no need to settle for a men's frame.

TO BROWSE ALL THE BEST 2016 BIKES VISIT
WWW.BICYCLING.CO.ZA/BBG

An instant crowd gathers around the new steed, touching, lifting and tapping the frame.

debating, we finally decided on the new Cannondale Habit Carbon SE, and the proudly South African SwiftCarbon Hypervox.

Both epitomise some of the exciting trends in bikes for 2016. The Cannondale is that perfect mix between dependable trail bike that can descend over the trickiest

own is three, the *correct* number is $n+1$, where n is the number of bikes currently owned.

Mike
EDITOR
@MIKEFINCHSA

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Moon Cycle

#Moonlightmass is no more. Was Africa's biggest social ride a victim of its own success?

BY ANDRÉ VALENTINE

If you visit the website of Cape Town's #Moonlightmass, you're greeted with bold yellow text that reads, "Moonlight Mass Is Back On!" But the next scheduled ride, it says, is on 6 November 2014, and in fact, #Moonlightmass is no more.

Started to raise awareness about non-motorised transport, #Moonlightmass grew exponentially, from just 12 participants to 4 000 – but as the numbers increased, so did the demands.

At the event's peak, the City of Cape Town became concerned about logistical and safety issues. Co-founders Daniel Graham and Elad Kirshenbaum met with a variety of local council departments to find solutions. They received backing from ward councillor Beverley Schaefer and Western Cape Minister of Economic Opportunities Alan Winde. But

the City's concerns persisted; and according to Graham, the only way for #Moonlightmass to continue was to make it an official event.

As per the Safety at Sports and Recreational Events Act of 2010, Graham and Kirshenbaum would have had to organise medical assistance, marshals, registration, and a host of other requirements – and would have had to charge, which was a boundary they wouldn't cross.

"#Moonlightmass was always intended to be free, fun and social. Come and go as you please," explains Graham.

He doesn't blame local government though, saying he and Kirshenbaum just didn't want to "jump the hurdles" to make it happen every month. "We're not event organisers, and that's the main reason for us not continuing the ride."

But while #Moonlightmass is gone, other 'protest' rides have

grown, with Critical Mass taking place in Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban and Cape Town.

Critical Mass is a worldwide 'monthly political protest ride' started in San Francisco in 1992.

The Joburg and Durban rides take place on the last Friday of each month, Pretoria on the first Friday of the month, while Cape Town has kept the #Moonlightmass theme alive by riding at full moon.

According to Critical Mass Cape Town social media

there is no official support. Neale believes that because of Joburg's transport issues, they get away without any noise from local government. "It would look bad for them to counter a cycling movement, considering their transport agenda," he says.

Meanwhile, Graham observes that despite its demise, #Moonlightmass achieved something big. "#Moonlightmass served its purpose," he says, though there's still the feeling that more

“As the numbers increased, so did the demands...”

spokesperson Irvine Long, this was a deliberate attempt to piggyback on #Moonlightmass's social media capital. They don't get the same high attendance though, with "a bit over 100" riders every month, says Long.

Johannesburg Critical Mass attracts up to 4 000 riders, but hasn't come under any pressure from local government. In fact, chief organiser Melvin Neale says the mayor of Johannesburg has encouraged the ride, though

could have been done to keep it alive. But no-one can be blamed: the authorities couldn't afford to turn a blind eye, and it got too big for its founders to handle. Perhaps the City could have provided the resources to keep it safe (and free). Maybe the legislation needs to be re-evaluated for social rides. Cape Town *needs* events like #Moonlightmass. After all, it's trying to build a reputation as SA's most cycling-friendly city.



LIVE TO

RIDE



The first thing you'll notice as you glide down the road is how swiftly the trees and images of nature fly by at what seems like supersonic speeds. Next you may notice the wind racing past your ears. It's like every road you take leads to heaven. Like around every corner a new world is waiting to be discovered. Never again will you wake up thinking — what can I do today? Life is for living, the road is yours to create. Go live. Go ride. #ridbeyond!

RIDE BEYOND📍

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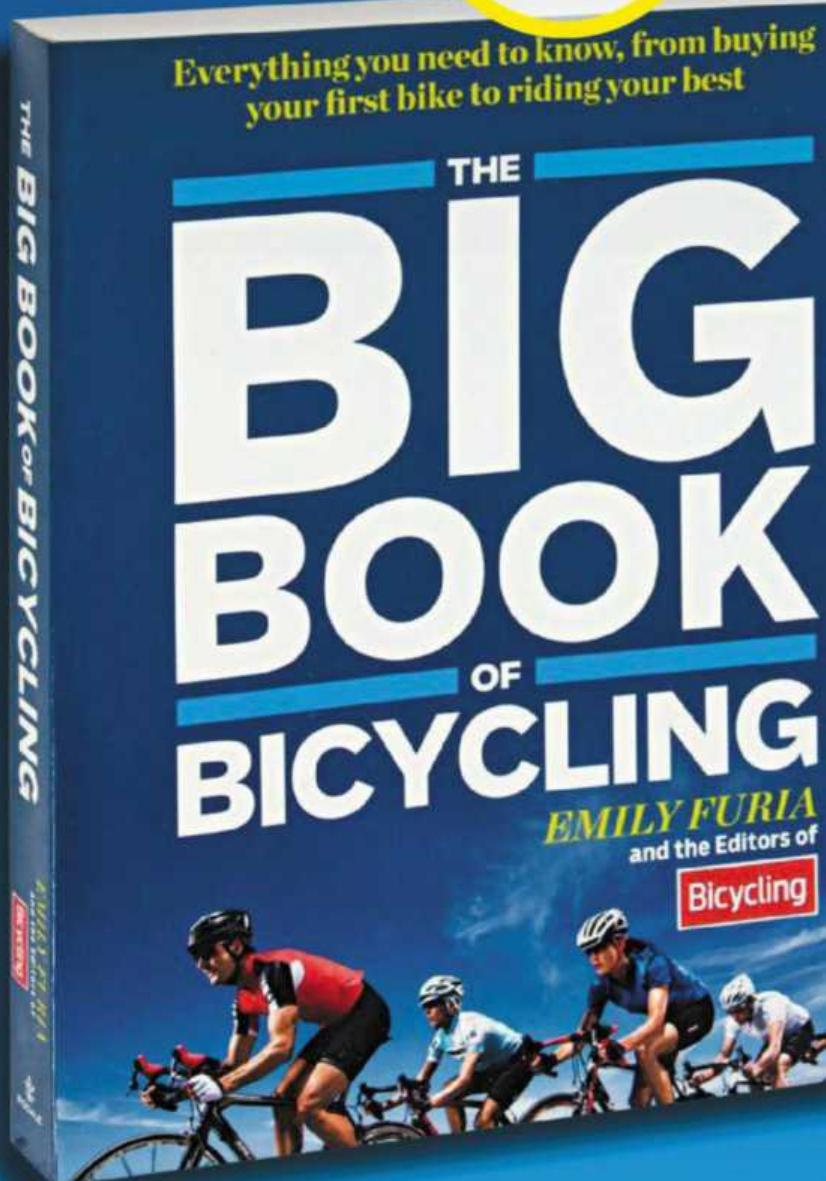


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I was a teenager when I first saw a picture of a frame-builder, a gritty black-and-white photograph. In the centre, a nearly completed road frame was held in a vice. Bending over the frame was a tall man with wild hair and a large leather apron, directing a torch at the frame's head tube. Dark glasses reflected the glare from the torch and a halo of light surrounded the scene. To my adolescent mind, already consumed by all things cycling, that portrait could have been of a modern-day magician. Owning a hand-built bicycle was a dream I never expected to realise. Little did I know that one day I'd actually build my own.

DAVID MERCER, 37 / CAPE TOWN

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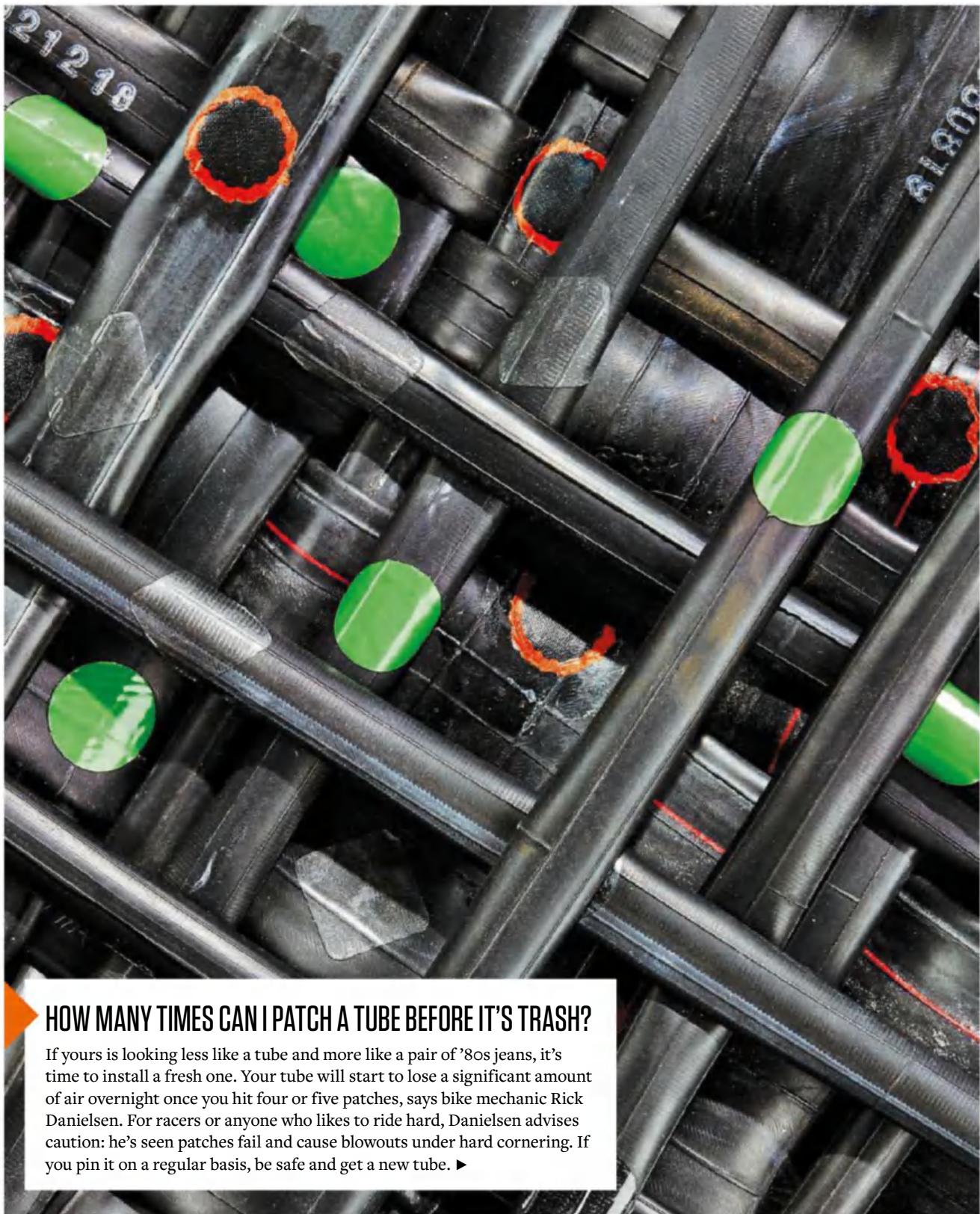
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HOW MANY TIMES CAN I PATCH A TUBE BEFORE IT'S TRASH?

If yours is looking less like a tube and more like a pair of '80s jeans, it's time to install a fresh one. Your tube will start to lose a significant amount of air overnight once you hit four or five patches, says bike mechanic Rick Daniels. For racers or anyone who likes to ride hard, Daniels advises caution: he's seen patches fail and cause blowouts under hard cornering. If you pin it on a regular basis, be safe and get a new tube. ►



► Should I Strava my rides to work?

It depends on what you're trying to achieve. Whether or not your daily ride to the office nets you any trophies, using Strava is still a worthwhile way to track mileage. If your commute is long enough to double as a training ride, or if you're just interested in seeing how many car trips you cut out during the year, then go ahead and press that orange start button.

Of course, some riders prefer the uncomplicated cruising that accompanies a spin to work. If you're happier clearing your head than charting your kilometres, keep your data off.

► Is it okay to heckle at races?

Sure, but use some common sense. Even the racers who appear to be having fun are still working hard and (sometimes) trying for a good result. Target people you know, and shoot for cleverness over cruelty. Your goal should be to get the person you're razzing to laugh or even just smile through the haze of pain. And, whatever you do, stick to words – physical contact is out of line, and as fun as it may seem, beer spraying is unacceptable.

► I want to help pull at the front of the paceline, but I'm not as strong as the rest of the riders. How long should I pedal to do my fair share?

A paceline works most efficiently when every rider shares the load to the best of his ability: no more, no less. When it's your turn to lead, maintain the pace for as long as you can without frying yourself (even if that's just 45 seconds) and then pull off. In

general, each cyclist should sit at the front for no more than two to three minutes — lengthier pulls can make you more tired as the ride goes on. If there are a couple of significantly stronger cyclists in the line, they can take longer, five- to 10-minute pulls to even out everyone's efforts. The more consistently you ride with the group, the fitter you'll get and the longer you'll feel confident on the front.

► My last road bike came with three chainrings. Now they all seem to come with two. What happened?

Cranksets with three chainrings (also known as triples) offer a wide range of gears and a super-small ring, which helps even the most inexperienced cyclist climb hills with relative ease. But they come with two key drawbacks: They're heavier than two-ring cranksets, and they don't work as well. The extra chainring adds more distance for the front derailleur to travel, which means more dropped or jammed chains and poorer shifting.

The solution, the compact crankset, came from the back of the drivetrain. As manufacturers added more cogs to their



cassettes, they were able to offer wider gear ranges. This meant they could reduce the number of front chainrings while still maintaining the middle gear ratios, which eliminated the need for the clunky three-ring system.

► Is it possible to wear a helmet-mounted camera without looking like a dork?

No. Even the raddest of rad pros look stupid with a camera strapped to their heads. But if nerding out in the name of a

▼
(UM...)
**HOW CAN
I KEEP USED ENERGY-
GEL PACKETS FROM
GUMMING UP
EVERYTHING IN MY
POCKETS?**

Gel is sticky business, so we consulted an expert: Yuri Hauswald, marketing manager for GU Energy Labs and a burly ultra-endurance racer who sucked down 112 gels in one month last year. His advice: tear the top open, leaving the tab attached to cut down on litter. Put the open end in your mouth and squeeze the gel from the bottom up, folding the packet like a tube of toothpaste as you suck down the fuel. Then crease the top of the packet down and bend the bottom part around it so there's no leakage in your pocket.

good time is wrong, then we don't want to be right.

► **I always bring a toolbox to rides, and lately I've been doling out lube to the same buddy every weekend. How can I tell my friend he's running me dry?**

Be direct, but kind, says Patricia Napier-Fitzpatrick, founder of the Etiquette School of New York. For example: "I don't mind you borrowing my chain lube occasionally, but it's probably time you get some for yourself." If you prefer to avoid confrontation, it's okay to get a little sneaky. Tell your friend that, sadly, you're out of lube — because it runs out much faster when multiple people use it. Either way, recommend your favourite brand for his purchase. Your buddy obviously trusts your excellent taste in bike products, and the next time you're out of lube (or maybe even if you're not), it's only fair that you should ask to borrow some of his.

► **I heard I can pour Coke into my frame to loosen a seized seatpost—is that true?**

Bike mechanics have long recommended the 'real thing' as a last-ditch home remedy for locked-in parts. "Coke's corrosive properties will eat away galvanic corrosion if you pour a can down the bottom-bracket shell and let it sit overnight (while the bike is upside down and the bottom bracket is removed)," says veteran mechanic Tommy Tuite. However, it might not be the most effective way to get the job done. "I personally use WD40 or Q20 for metal stuck on metal." Hmm... Coke's

5.1

HOW MANY YEARS LONGER CYCLISTS WHO REGULARLY RODE AT HIGH INTENSITY LIVED WHEN COMPARED WITH THOSE WHO RODE AT AN EASY PACE FOR THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME. SO GET MOVING – YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT.

SOURCE: EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF PREVENTATIVE CARDIOLOGY

corrosive properties, you say? Stick with the corrosion-removing real thing instead.

► **What's the quickest way to get better at hills?**

Use good technique, says *Bicycling* contributor Selene Yeager, a certified cycling coach and fitness trainer. As you approach the hill, make sure you're in a gear that's easy enough to keep the pedals moving smoothly. Then follow these steps:

SLIDE BACK AND DIG IN

Move back on your saddle and tuck in your elbows. This engages your core for a more solid pedalling platform and helps harness additional power from your upper body. Drop your heels as you come around the top of the stroke. This is key to getting your powerful hamstrings into action.

SHIFT FORWARD AND SPIN

On long climbs, give your legs a little reboot. Slide forward toward the saddle's nose and spin a little faster for 30 to 60 seconds to transfer the workload to other muscles. Move back once that time's up.

STAND UP TO CREST

When you can see the top of the hill, shift to a bigger gear, get out of the saddle, and

power yourself up and over the top. Keep your hard-earned momentum by continuing to pedal as you start to roll down the other side.

other barriers might be there for practical reasons, such as deterring motorised vehicles. But most often, trail obstacles are purposely put in place to give more experienced riders a challenge. A log that looks unrideable to you could be the best part of a trail for a more skilled mountain biker. If there's something you can't clear, embrace it and practise until you can. Your other option is to get off and walk it.

Don't know where to start in your quest to improve your skill? Visit bicycling.co.za/skills for loads of skills content – and get started on clearing those obstacles.



My local trails have crazy-big logs and rocks, which makes the trails really hard to ride. Is it okay to remove them?

If the trails are on your property, then by all means. Otherwise, you should ask permission from whomever maintains them. On private singletrack, this may be a trail group; for public land, check with local authorities. Logs and

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Want more tips and advice? Visit www.bicycling.co.za for the latest news, bike & gear reviews, training & nutrition advice, and much more.

BY OLI MUNNIK
PHOTO BY JAMES GARAGHTY

PEDAL BLING

When it comes to mountain-bike pedals, the bulletproof Shimano SPD pedal-and-cleat combo is the go-to option for most riders. Their performance is hard to fault – but Shimano pedals are generally dull and uninspiring when it comes to the decorative department.

If you're looking to add some flair to your ride, these SPD-compatible iSSi II Triple pedals, shown in Radiant Gold, are offered in nine spectacular colours. Available in two axle lengths, easily serviceable and running on three sealed bearings, they'll add spice to your feet.

iSSi II TRIPLE PEDALS // R1 450 //
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DOUBLE TREACHERY

Was it okay of me to ditch my Coronation Double Century teammates just to go off on honeymoon to Zanzibar with my lovely new wife?

– Mike, Newlands

N

No, Michael, it was not. Your friends needed you over those 209 kilometres. They missed your company, your banter, your ability to be the first at the halfway-point refreshment table, the drinks afterwards at the Full Stop in Swellendam and the boozy lunch at Van Loveren the next day. They missed your friendship, Michael. They missed your voice and face. Besides, because you weren't there, someone else had to be the last person over the line.

UBER-LAZY

During the Momentum 947 Cycle Challenge, riders had the option of calling a mechanic on the route, via Uber. I don't mean to sound like a cycling prude, but isn't that a little bit lazy, and not quite in the spirit of racing?

– Gert, Graaff-Reinet

Having a mechanical or a puncture is a dreadful thing. It kills the smooth momentum we have established with our mates. I can't count the number of times I've told the group to go on without me. You don't want to take any of their fun away. I remember riding with a friend on his first 947 Cycle Challenge. I sat in front of him in the wind, put his chain back on, and even gave him bottles. Fifteen kilometres from the end, something sheared a chunk off the top of my rear tyre. I repaired it while my friend waited, but I told him to go on. I did 1km sprints from then, stopping to pump up the tyre every kilometre. By the time I finished, my arms were the size of my legs. If Uber had been available that day, I would have been the first on the app for help.

RIDER 2 RIDER

WINNING TIP

STRAIGHT AND NARROW

To get an adjusted MTB saddle back into position, take a 2m piece of string and tie one end to the rear tyre. Centre the knot in the middle of the width of the tyre, then run the string through the centre of the back of your saddle and your headset, and tie it to your front tyre. Rotate the front wheel to make the line taut, then adjust the front point of your saddle so that the string runs under its midpoint. – Peter Steele



Steer Clear

To avoid clipping tree branches when riding on narrow forest tracks, just concentrate on missing the tree or branch on one side of your bars. The other side will miss too. – Mike Marais



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- Stan's ZTR Crest Comp Wheelset with BST (Bead Socket Technology) for easy tubeless conversion and true tubeless performance
- Ritchey Carbon WCS Handlebar with WCS C-260 Stem - high quality and superlight cockpit components
- Fizik THAR Saddle with Custom Carbon Seatpost - popular aftermarket upgrades standard out the box





The Big Surprise

MIRACLES HAPPEN WHEN YOU LEAST EXPECT THEM.

A

AFTER MONTHS OF HARD WORK BY CYCLING SA WOMEN'S COMMISSION DIRECTOR LISE OLIVIER, WE

ARE ABLE TO REPRESENT SOUTH AFRICA AT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS IN EUROPE.

It started with a bang at the GP Plouya World Cup. My bunch positioning was good but I struggled with the surges and intensity, having ridden mostly

MTB the past few years.

I could ride 170-180bpm for four hours, but I couldn't hold 200bpm for one minute (my max is around 210bpm).

From there we moved onto the Tour of Ardeche, which is a tough race with lots of climbing. During this tour I suffered stomach issues, and joked about being pregnant. I put it down to being unused to the different foods we were eating.

However, by the last tour in Italy – the Giro del' Toscana – my stomach pains had still not subsided. Suddenly, being pregnant didn't seem far-

fetched; and after four pregnancy tests, it was confirmed.

My unborn baby's health became the important thing to me and I didn't want to take risks, so I decided to pull out of the tour.

But the team still had the World Champs in America. So I spoke to CSA, and because it was too late to send someone else, we decided

“My unborn baby's health became the important thing...”

I would race half the event to support Ashleigh Moolman-Pasio, and then pull out.

Seeing that ultrasound-scan heartbeat for the first time has changed my world. I am so grateful for this miracle, and I'm looking forward to the next chapter of my life.

Cherise Stander races for Team RECM, and represented South Africa at the 2014 Commonwealth Games.



HEALTH

Weird Symptoms

3 strange reactions to grinding hard on the bike.

BY MOLLY HURFORD

Cycling can make our bodies do strange things. But they aren't cause for alarm, says sports medicine practitioner Dr Jordan Metzl. He looks at what causes some of these symptoms.



RACER COUGH “This can happen when you exert yourself at a much harder level than you're used to,” says Metzl. It's also more common when you're racing in cold and/or dry conditions. Your airways must work harder to humidify the air, so your lungs can get dehydrated – leading to constriction.



METALLIC TASTE Those are your red blood cells popping, says Metzl. “When you push yourself past threshold, your red blood cells are being taxed, and release some heme (or iron), which is why it tastes like metal,” he says. If it's temporary, it's nothing to worry about.



MAD ITCHING In some cases it's just dry skin, or a response to warming up. But for some people, it's an allergic reaction known as exercise-induced urticaria, which can cause itching and flushing as well as hives. Keep your skin moisturised, warm up gradually, and scratch as needed.

NEW STUFF

DRIPDROP

This rehydration supplement offers 2 to 3 times more electrolytes and 50% less sugar than conventional sports drinks. It also contains no artificial colourants, sweeteners or preservatives and is also caffeine- and stimulant-free.

– AV

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R2 200 (96 sachets)
dripdropops.co.za





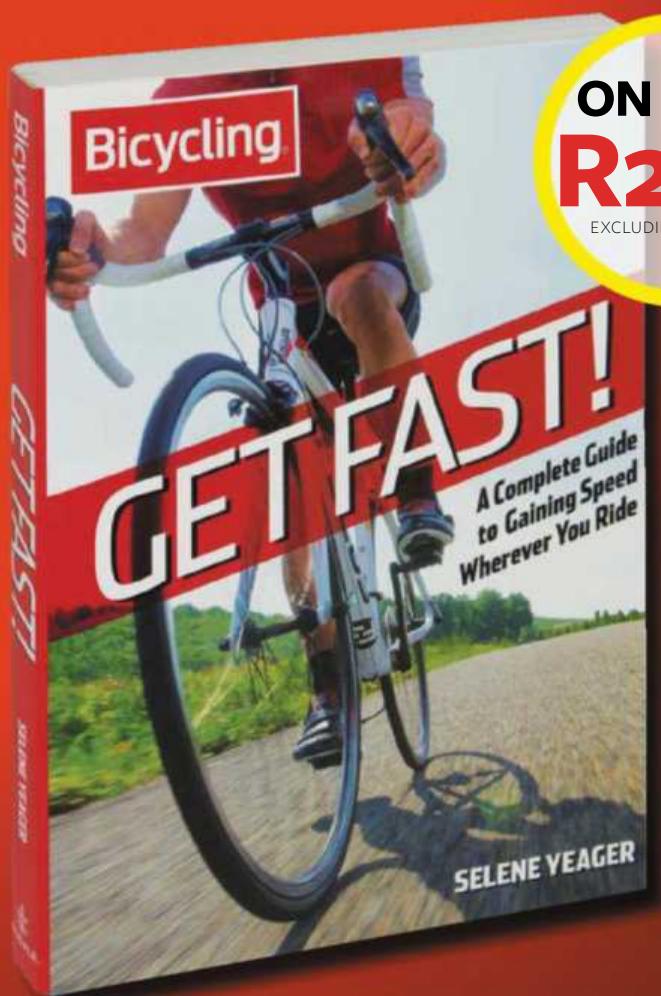
YOU WANT TO GAIN SPEED WHEREVER YOU RIDE? HERE'S HOW!

› GET FAST

Every cyclist wants to get faster, from front-of-the-pack racers to chatty charity-ride participants.

Producing more speed is what makes riding a bike worthwhile – whether you want to improve your seeding position at the next Cycle Tour, or add a bit more zest to your weekend ride. Going fast makes everything more fun – and here's the book that's going to help you do it.

**A Complete Guide to
Gaining Speed
Wherever You Ride**



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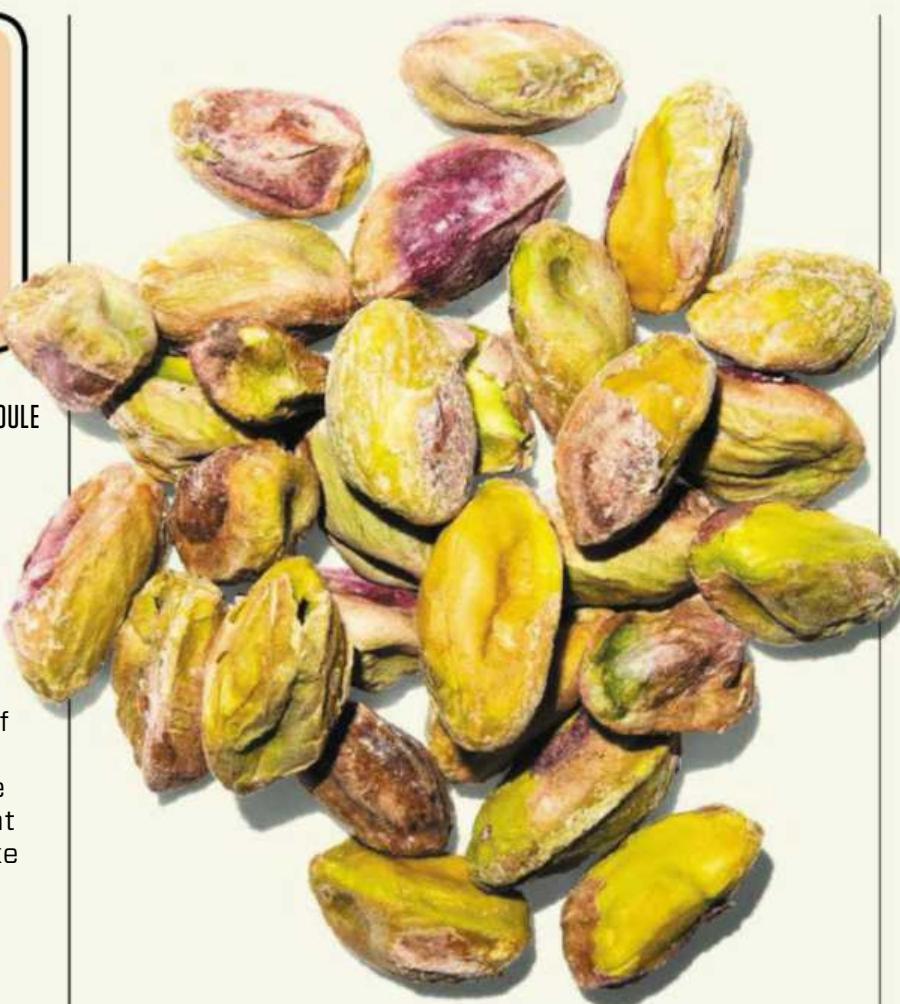
PISTACHIOS IN A
30-GRAM, 670-KILOJOULE
SERVING

SNACK THE RAINBOW

That yellow-green hue of pistachio nuts, and the deep purple colour of their skins, are evidence of the high antioxidant levels that make pistachios an ideal post-interval nosh. Antioxidants fight cell damage and inflammation – the stuff that causes your muscles to feel sore and swollen after a hard workout.



Electrolytes, including sodium and potassium, are crucial for keeping your muscles moving during hard efforts. One serving of pistachios has 290mg of potassium – about half as much as a large banana.



GET CRACKIN'

Pistachios aren't just a tasty snack food. Here's how these colourful nuts can fuel your ride and speed your recovery. BY TAYLOR ROJEK

SHELL GAME Unshelled pistachios require effort to crack open, which forces you to snack more slowly. That's good news for your waistline – a recent study in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* shows that eating slowly gives you time to realise you're full, so you hoover down less.

PHYTOSTEROLS

These plant-derived substances have been shown to boost heart health by reducing the absorption of cholesterol into your body. Pistachios have the highest levels of beta-sitosterol (a type of phytosterol) of any nut.



PISTACHIO PESTO

Serve this savoury spread on pasta, toast, chicken, or fish.

1 cup salted, shelled pistachios
2 cups spinach leaves
½ cup fresh basil leaves
½ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
Zest and juice of 1 lemon
¼ teaspoon black pepper
¼ cup olive oil
Salt to taste

Coarsely grind pistachios in a food processor. Add spinach, basil, Parmesan cheese, lemon zest and juice, pepper, and olive oil. Blend until smooth. Add salt, if desired.

Nigel Mitchell, head of nutritional services to British Cycling and Team Sky and personal nutritionist to sprint star Mark Cavendish, makes this flavourful sauce for the pros he works with.



Grams of muscle-building protein in a serving, which is more than you'd get from the same-sized portion of beef. Eating protein after a workout helps build and repair muscle – cyclists should aim for 20 to 30 grams of protein within 30 minutes after a hard ride.

17

INDEPENDENT
REVIEWS
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BE
WRONG



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Chain Reaction

BY DR JEROEN SWART

Q NO MATTER HOW FIT OR LIGHT I AM, RACING WITH A 1X11 SET-UP AND A 30-TOOTH CHAINRING (OR 32, OR 28) I FATIGUE EARLIER, CRAMP MORE QUICKLY, AND MY 'LACTIC ACID' RECOVERY IS LONGER. WHY?

– Rob, Cape Town

A There are a number of possibilities; let's look at each one individually.

GEAR INCHES ▶ How far the bike moves with each pedal stroke. In the days of three front chainrings you could select a very easy gear, or a very hard gear, or just about anything in between. Now we've reduced to two front chainrings – and with 1x11, down to one – we've lost some range. Also, the step between gears is a little bigger than it was previously.

With a single front chainring, you

“...with 1x11, we have lost some of this gear range...

either have too few easy gears or too few hard gears. You either grind out a bigger gear than is optimal, or spin too much

in a gear that's too small. Both result in premature fatigue.

CHAIN WRAP In a heavier gear on a 1x11 set-up, the chain must move around a smaller rear cog, and each link moves to a greater degree at the pivot point. And the force pulling the links into the chainring is higher on a smaller chainring. So there's increased friction in smaller chainrings that offsets any weight benefit from having fewer cogs in the front. Stuart Burgess at the University of Bristol has shown that doubling chainring size increases chain efficiency by up to 0.6 per cent.

CHAINLINE ▶ How straight the chain runs between front and rear sprockets. Ideally both should be in the same plane,

so there's no sideward motion or stress to the chain. The cassette sprocket is seldom in line with a single front chainring, causing sideways flex at each link, friction, and reduced efficiency. Johns Hopkins University in the US concluded the effects were small, but may still have an impact.

BIKE FIT ▶ Larger wheel sizes and carbon frames have resulted in a deviation from straight tubes and traditional frame angles, making it difficult to measure saddle height, saddle setback and handlebar position relative to the bottom bracket. Your position may be the factor altering your performance.

This is a complex issue, with inter-related factors. Get your bike set up correctly first. Still have problems? Going back to 2x10 may be the solution.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS



Dr Jeroen Swart is a sports physician and exercise physiologist at the Sports Science Institute of South Africa.

WATER HOLDER

Ever suffered from sudden weight gain? You could be experiencing water retention, caused by consuming sodium-enriched foods or drinks. Water retention is a subjective symptom in healthy individuals, as true water retention is only ever associated with chronic diseases like heart failure, kidney disease, and disorders of the endocrine system. If you think you're suffering from leg swelling, or notice a clear increase in weight after drinking sodium-rich sports drinks, check with your doctor to ensure that this isn't a medical condition. Should they give you the all-clear, avoid these types of drinks and observe the response.



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~~Back Pain~~
~~Joint Pain~~
~~Swelling~~
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The Perfect Drink

DRINKING WATER IS THE BEST WAY TO HYDRATE, RIGHT? WRONG! THAT'S BECAUSE 'HYDRATION' AND 'DRINKING' ARE NOT THE SAME THING...

BY MARK CARROLL

'Drinking fluids' and 'hydration' are two different things. Drinking is putting fluids into the body, while hydration is a term used to describe the body's ability to manage water. To maintain a healthy fluid balance, the body will either hold onto or release water. This becomes challenging during physical activity, so the volume and type of fluids you drink become important, for both performance and health.

WHEN JUST DRINKING IS ENOUGH

For short-duration activity, mild temperature and moderate sweat rate, water works just fine. But for longer rides in hot weather, a sports drink containing sodium, magnesium, potassium and calcium will hydrate you better, while replacing minerals lost

through sweating.

In extreme endurance activities with heavy sweat rates, where sodium loss can be anywhere from 400mg to 800mg per litre of sweat, just drinking water dilutes sodium to dangerously low levels, leading to nausea, muscle spasm, seizures, and even death.

DRINK OSMOLALITY VS BLOOD OSMOLALITY

Getting this balance right is important for performance, and to ensure you don't get sick during long rides. Fluid osmolality (concentration, essentially) is determined by the amount of carbohydrate, electrolytes, colourants, and sweetener in the drink, which can significantly impair performance. Blood osmolality (measured in milliosmoles) is a measure of all concentrated chemical



particles in the fluid part of the blood.

The kidneys work to maintain a regular osmolality range in the blood of between 275 and 295 milliosmoles, by either releasing or holding onto water. A 4% carbohydrate drink (4g carbohydrate per 100ml water) with electrolytes and nothing else will have an osmolality in the same range as ordinary blood. This makes it much easier for it to move through the stomach and into the blood to aid

“...water dilutes sodium to dangerously low levels...

hydration and performance.

A higher concentration – an 8% solution, for example – will force the blood to release fluid into the gut to dilute the solution. This can lead to dehydration or at least impair hydration, causing bloating, nausea and

stomach cramps.

HYDRATION AND PERFORMANCE

Typically, performance tests are measured by time to exhaustion: ride at a certain percentage of VO₂ max, see how long it takes to tire, recover, change something, and repeat the test. When testing the affect of dehydration on performance, it's been found that a 2 to 4% loss of body fluid impairs performance anywhere between 7 and 44%.

Although the fact that these test results vary so significantly does make them questionable, you can't deny the link between dehydration and performance. There are a few athletes who can maintain a high level of performance at dehydration rates greater than 4%, but they are mostly elites whose bodies are well trained to use nutrition and other resources more effectively.

The average person sweats out 800 to 1 400ml (and some, up to 2 litres) of fluid per hour during exercise, along with sodium and other electrolytes. This is more fluid than can be absorbed through the gut.

To keep ahead of fluid loss as much as possible while placing minimal stress on the gastro-intestinal system, consume 500ml to 750ml of a relatively low-kilojoule drink (around 340kJ per 500ml) with electrolytes. Remember too

that artificial colourants, sweeteners, artificial flavours, etc. will add to the ‘thickness’ of the drink, compromising absorption while adding nothing to functional value.

THE COACH



Mark Carroll
owns Cadence Cycling
Performance & chairs the CSA
Coaching Commission.

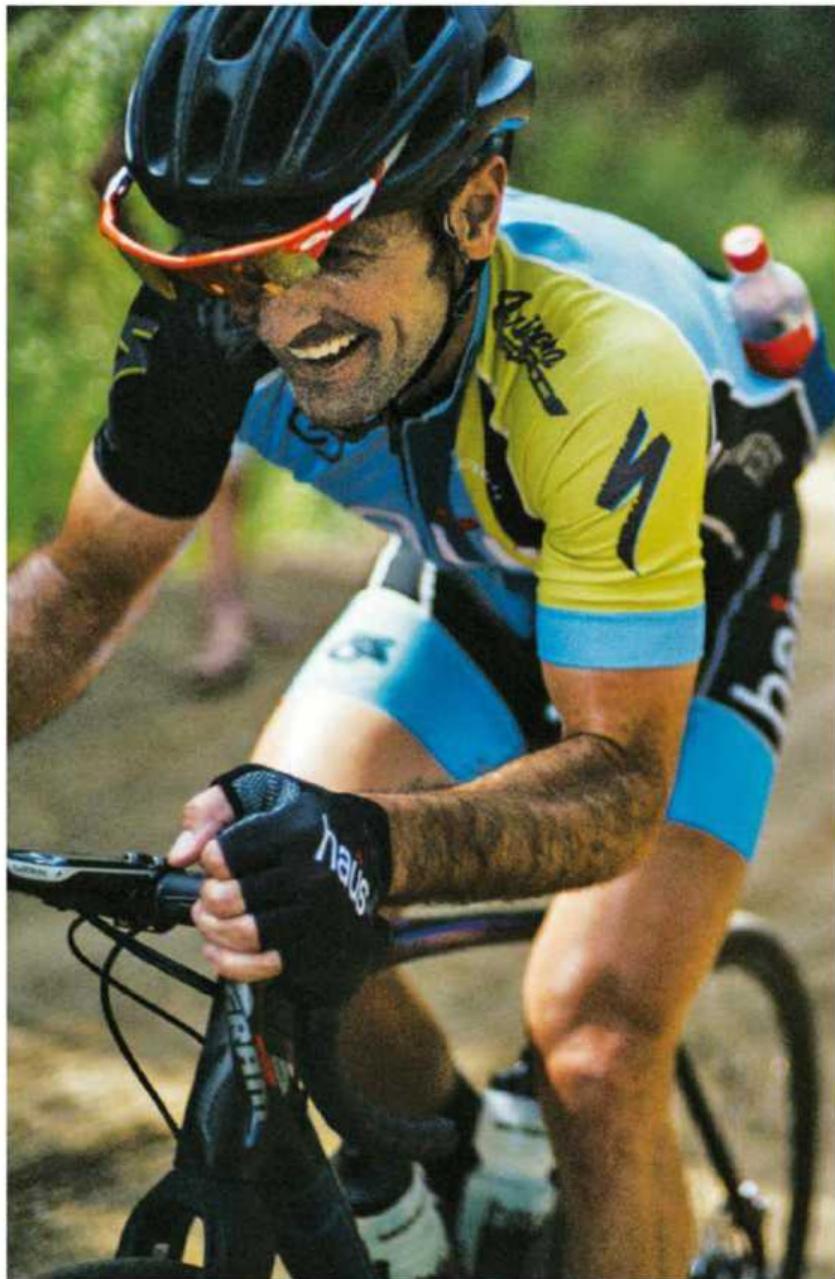
CRAMPING YOUR STYLE

There's a popular belief that the main cause of cramp is loss of electrolytes. Though this is a factor, lack of conditioning and dehydration are just as liable. In some cases, all of these factors together can cause cramp.

While conditioning is entirely down to training, you can decrease your chances of cramping up by drinking enough fluids and keeping electrolyte intakes high. Note that water alone – especially on long rides – can make cramp worse, as it dilutes the sodium in the body, making it less effective.

5 Habits to Break on Dirt

Getting into the gravel-grinder craze? Break these roadie habits for an easier transition. BY MOLLY RITTERBECK



1 PUMPING YOUR TYRES WAY UP

1 // Prep your bike with a bigger set of tyres. "Wider tyres with lower pressure will give you more comfort, control, and traction," says former pro and bike shop owner Brandon Dwight. Install the biggest tyre that will fit your frame (most road bikes can accommodate 25mm or 28mm tyres), and experiment with different pressures. Try dropping 20 to 35kpa at a time to see what feels best for you, he says.

2 STAYING GLUED TO SOMEONE'S WHEEL

2 // Riding dirt is all about picking good lines and avoiding hazards. If you're riding in a group, give each other a little more space than you would on the road. This will allow you to scan further ahead, giving everyone more space to react to obstacles like rocks and holes.

3 CARRYING JUST A TUBE AND CO₂

3 // You're much more likely to have a mechanical on rough terrain, so bring two tubes,

plus a vulcanising patch kit (the kind that has a rubber cement-like solution) and a multitool, says former road pro Burke Swindlehurst. And as with pavement riding, a back-up hand pump is always a good idea.

4 RELYING ON CIVILISATION

4 // Dirt roads often lead to remote locations, and any mileage will take longer than it would on pavement. So plan ride time accordingly, and bring extra food and fluids, says Swindlehurst. "Check that you have cell service and let someone know where you are," he adds. "If at any point you lose bars completely, it might be a good time to turn back."

5 RIDING AGGRESSIVELY

5 // Take corners wider on dirt than you would on pavement to avoid sliding out, says US Cyclocross pro Meredith Miller. And rather than hammering out of the saddle, stay seated and keep your weight back over your rear wheel on climbs, to maintain traction.



Q / A **How do I get grease stains out of my clothes?** You can use Elizabeth Anne's Baby Stain Remover on the mark. Just rub it on and let the clothing sit for the recommended amount of time, says Pro Team head soigneur Niki Detrick. Or use a bike degreaser or a dishwashing liquid, and scrub the mark lightly with a toothbrush. Let it sit for about five minutes, then rinse. You may need to repeat this step a few times to get out as much grease as possible. Then wash the clothes in warm water – cold water won't break down oils, and hot water breaks down elastic – and make sure the stain is gone before drying.

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Beating The Odds

IF YOUR LIGHT FALLS OFF ON THE MOUNTAIN, BUT NO-ONE IS THERE TO SEE IT, WILL YOU EVER GET IT BACK?

I ARRIVED HOME FROM MY COMMUTE, DISMOUNTED, AND REACHED DOWN TO TAKE MY LIGHT OFF THE HANDLEBARS.

THERE WAS NOTHING THERE.

Perhaps I've left it at work, I thought hopefully. Because if it wasn't at work, then it was somewhere on Table Mountain, whose rocky slopes I ride to and from work – and if it *was* on Table Mountain, there would be more chance of President Zuma paying back the money than of me finding it.

I checked when I arrived at the office the next day – no light. It had cost me about R1000, and I'd just spent R500 on an extra mount for attaching to my road bike, a helmet mount, and a new battery.

I was bleak – and not just because of the money; I loved that light. It was a sleek silver Lezyne, which had helped me slice through the dark of three winters.

"Don't worry," said Moose, my fellow commuter. "It'll turn up."

I searched my bag again and again – it was easier than searching Table Mountain, which I attempted to do anyway. On every ride I'd scan the ground, hoping to spy a glint of chrome. But the days turned into weeks, which turned into months; and I was still in the dark. I was not delighted about being de-lighted.

One morning I rode with Rich. He told me he could only ride for an hour, and turned back halfway. But when I uploaded my ride to Strava, I saw that Rich had in

fact ridden for an hour and 28 seconds. I felt the need to comment about those extra 28 seconds.

And that comment triggered a chain of events that saw me and my light reunited.

Rameez Abrahams, a rider who follows Rich on Strava, spotted my comment and recognised my name; we're both mountain commuters. His interest piqued, he browsed idly through my Strava record – and came across an old ride on which I'd posted an 'arty' photo I'd taken through my handlebars, of the view from the Blockhouse. I'd taken the picture before my light somersaulted off the handlebar mount. Abrahams, a single-speed machine, sent me a message, asking if I'd lost the light in the photo.

"You'll never get them back," he said. "They're gone."

From the policeman's indifferent shrug I could tell his investigation would end as soon as we walked out the door. My face fell.

Whitfield and I were among a team of journos hacking out stories for the Epic, when we emerged from our guesthouse in Worcester to find our wheels had been nicked.

But at 5pm a policeman strolled into the race village, handed our wheels back, then sauntered away. I never found out how they'd been retrieved, although a few of my fellow journalists had some ideas: "The pressure got to the criminals – they were tyred of pedalling their wares around



“I was not delighted about being de-lighted.”

He'd found my light months before, and had set about trying to find its rightful owner – unsuccessfully, until I posted that "extra 28 seconds" comment.

What were the odds? Well, according to Zuma maths, about eleventy-point-two million to one.

A few months earlier, I'd got even shorter odds from a constable at the Worcester police station, when Cape Epic spokesman Chris Whitfield and I went to report that each of us had had a wheel stolen off our bikes.

town," said Iceman, trying to keep a straight face.

I'd like to think the policeman saw my face fall and was inspired to do his job, which led him to the criminals and our wheels.

Later, back on the bike with my returned light and my reclaimed wheel, I thought about The Odds. And it dawned on me that in the casino, the house always wins; but in a world with Good Samaritans like Abrahams, and inspired policemen, the bike will always beat the odds.

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STAGES
CYCLING

MATTEO CONTI'S

1976 BIANCHI SPRINT 76

WORDS OLI MUNNIK | PHOTO MATTEO CONTI

Hailing from the shores of Lake Como, Italy, Matteo Conti moved to South Africa in 2004, when he was 16. Fast forward 12 years, and Conti – now a professional photographer – has developed a searing passion for simple mechanical ‘objects’ like his original 1976 Bianchi Sprint 76.

Rather than just focusing on modern-day machines, bursting with technology, Conti spends his spare time lovingly restoring and sourcing vintage bikes, both local and from Italy. He’s tinkering with the idea of starting a vintage-bike business but for now, he does it purely to feed his passion for the simple, elegant products of a bygone era.

INSTAGRAM @MATTEO_CONTI_PHOTOGRAPHY



LE PARTI (Parts)

It's not often

that Conti

finds a bike that needs as little work as the Sprint 76. The parts are all original and work like a dream, he says. He beams when showing me the Bianchi-branded frame-mounted pump and water bottle, both of which are painted celeste, matching the frame.

Contact points, namely the saddle and bar tape, are new ‘old-school’ purchases from Brooks. Both items make the Sprint 76 a more comfortable ride, and suit the bike’s vintage.



**IL TELAIO DELLA BICICLETTA** (*Frame*)

Lugged-steel Bianchi frames like that of Conti's 1976 Sprint are exquisite in their simplicity, and enduring in their toughness. And when painted in 'Bianchi celeste', they reach iconic status. Hand-brazed lugs in the head-tube, bottom bracket and seatpost reveal bespoke attention to detail, a throwback to steel's glory days in the '60s, '70s and '80s.

Conti's pride and joy found its way into his life via a friend of his dad's who lived in Milan, and had hung up his cleats. Incredibly, Conti hasn't had to touch this bike, having 'inherited' it in immaculate condition.

LE RUOTE E PNEUMATICI (*Wheels and Tyres*)

As with all the parts on Conti's Sprint 76, the wheels are original. Silver Nisi rims run on Campagnolo Super Record hubs, as if they came straight out of the factory. Modern 700x23C Vittoria Competition Rally tyres have been fitted. Conti says modern tyres are one of the very few things he doesn't mind compromising on – because rubber perishes, reducing its grip, control, and puncture-resistance.

IL GRUPPO (*Groupset*)

The Sprint 76's groupset too is entirely original and in perfect working order. Stopping power is provided by a set of Universal rim brakes, while shifting is taken care of by a pair of Campagnolo shifters positioned on the downtube. An unbranded crankset is fitted with 52/42T chainrings and works in conjunction with a 5-speed Campagnolo Valentino Extra rear mech and cassette. The front mech is also by Campagnolo.



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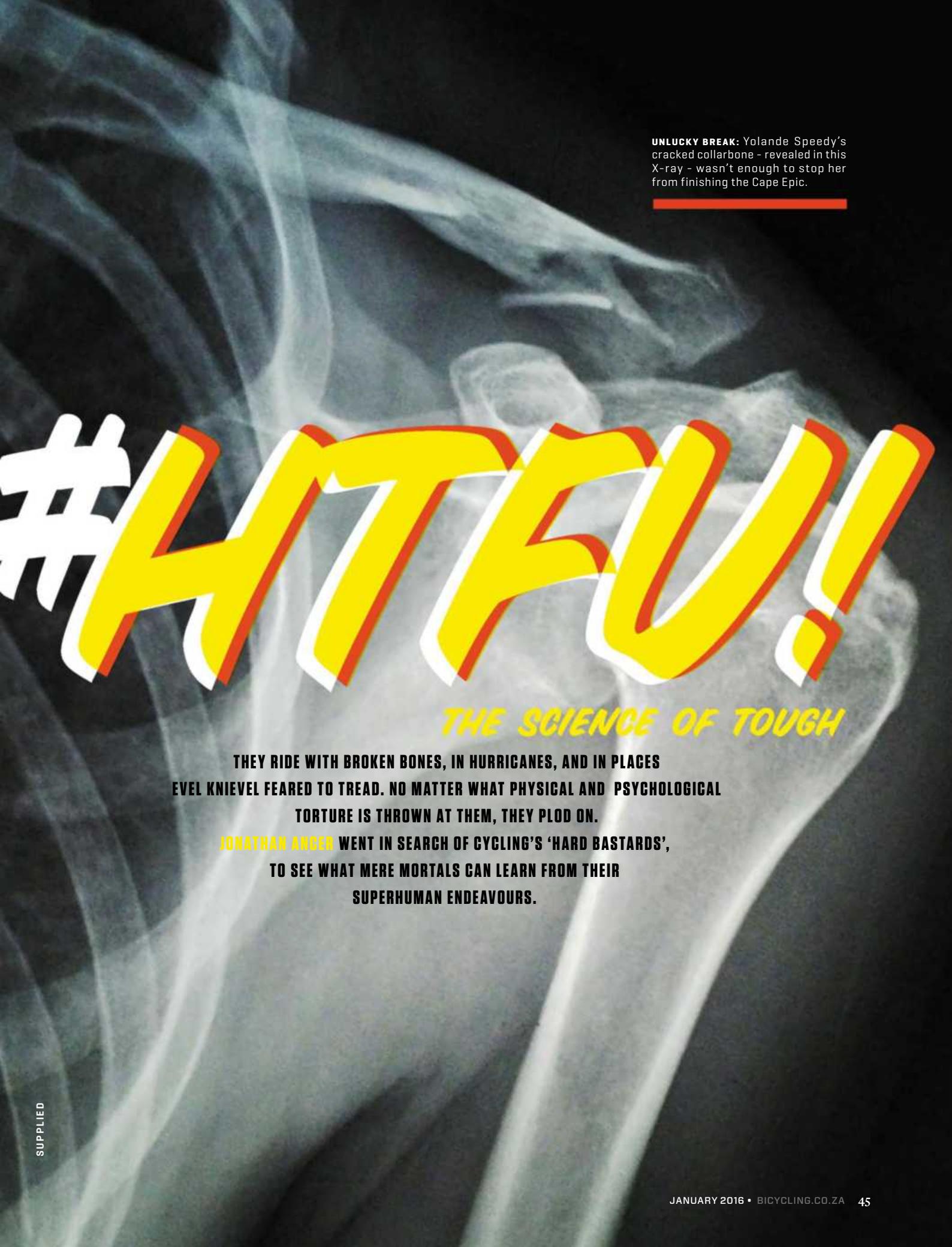
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A black and white X-ray image of a human collarbone, showing a prominent crack or fracture. The bone structure is visible against a dark background.

UNLUCKY BREAK: Yolande Speedy's cracked collarbone - revealed in this X-ray - wasn't enough to stop her from finishing the Cape Epic.

#HITAU!

THE SCIENCE OF TOUGH

THEY RIDE WITH BROKEN BONES, IN HURRICANES, AND IN PLACES
EVEL KNIEVEL FEARED TO TREAD. NO MATTER WHAT PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
TORTURE IS THROWN AT THEM, THEY PLOD ON.

JONATHAN ANCER WENT IN SEARCH OF CYCLING'S 'HARD BASTARDS',
TO SEE WHAT MERE MORTALS CAN LEARN FROM THEIR
SUPERHUMAN ENDEAVOURS.



SA's CHUCK NORRIS: Alex Harris battled bees, electric fences and hallucinations to conquer the 2012 Freedom Challenge.

FOR SOME, THE 'TOUGH AS NAILS' TEST IS PUSHING ON DESPITE BROKEN BONES. FOR OTHERS, IT'S BATTLING 17KM OF FROZEN ICE - AND FOR ALEX HARRIS, IT WAS A GAZILLION VOLTS OF ELECTRICITY AND A SWARM OF BEES, WHICH STILL WEREN'T ENOUGH TO STOP HIM. THE 43-YEAR-OLD ADVENTURER'S RUGGED PEDIGREE IS THE SIZE OF EVEREST, WHICH HE'S SCALED TWICE - IN FACT, HE'S SUMMITED ALL THE SEVEN PEAKS, AND WALKED TO THE SOUTH POLE. LET ME SAY THAT AGAIN: HE'S WALKED TO THE SOUTH FREAKING POLE.

Harris, who is SA's Chuck Norris of Doggedness, signed his name into cycling's Book of Tough in 2010, when he won the Freedom Challenge – a 2 300km, unsupported, individual MTB race along the Freedom Trail. It took him 14 days and eight hours, and he walked away with a blanket.

He returned in 2011 to win it again, shaving two days off his time and setting a course record. He didn't win in 2012, but he still broke his record (and his seat post), finishing three minutes shy of 11 days.

On the eighth day of that 2012 Freedom Challenge he took a short cut, but an electric fence was in his way. He had no choice – he had to get over the fence, which meant soaking up the volts. Twice. And he landed on a beehive – not the most comfortable choice.

He tweeted through the pain:

@alexanderharris: "Day 8. Drop into Mordor in the day. Feeling bold, and try a sneak. 2 electric fence shocks later, and 30 bee stings to the head and face... Pow!"

And later that day:

@alexanderharris: "Roll into Cambria with face swollen and head pounding. Sulk for about 45mins as I recover. Push on..."

Harris told himself this was a temporary setback. He got back on his bike, and rode into the night. "While you're still turning your wheels, you're still in the race," he says.

Another setback was being haunted by the demons of sleep-deprivation. Harris reckons he totalled about 17 hours asleep in those 11 days – an average of one-and-a-half hours of sleep a day, and it wasn't as if he was chilling for the other 22-and-a-half hours a day, either. When you're that sleep-deprived your brain's chemicals get out of whack, causing hallucinations.

But despite his never-say-die attitude, Harris has given up before. On the third day of his second Tour Divide – a 4 500km ride from the hinterlands of the Canadian Rockies to the badlands of the Mexican Plateau – he was

pushing his bike through the snow when he fell into a snow hole. He was in so much pain, he thought he'd broken both his legs; but they were only (and I use the word 'only' loosely) badly twisted. He managed to push on for two days, but with just 1 200km of the journey completed, his feet were so swollen he couldn't take off his shoes.

Harris knew that if he continued, he'd be doing long-term damage. "There's no time for recovery on the Tour Divide, so any injury is just compounded; and with so much distance still to cover, I realised there would be serious consequences if I continued. When it comes to pain, quitting is not an option – unless there are long-term consequences."

Harris says when you're in pain you think the moment will never end. "But it's just that – a moment. Tell yourself it will pass," he says, adding that pain isn't something to run from; it's an opportunity to build your character. "People quit too easily, and this reinforces your nature, but if you make a conscious decision *not* to quit, then the next time it will be harder to quit." And this power to persevere translates into other aspects of life – your work, and your relationships.

DREYER TOUGH There's tough. There's super-tough. And then there's Dreyer Tough: 46-year-old Martin Dreyer and his wife Jeannie Bomford are South Africa's First Couple of Hardcore.

In June they embarked on the Everesting challenge. 'Everesting' is a global concept in which riders climb up a hill (and down, and up again) until they've climbed the height equivalent of Mount Everest – 8 848 metres.

The Dreyers decided to ride the gnarly Sani Pass a gruelling 10 times, to raise money for the victims of the Nepal earthquakes. If that wasn't challenging enough, when they began at 6.30am on 28 June, it was snowing.

"The weather was a curveball of note, but Jeannie and I decided beforehand that quitting wasn't an option. When you've decided that, it simplifies your thinking," says Dreyer, also known as the Dusi Duke (he's won the canoe marathon seven times, and has since added the International Land Rover G4 title).

The couple were lashed by gale-force winds, and when the sun went down it was so cold they were knocking at the chilly door of hypothermia. The last two kays of switchbacks were covered in ice, so they had no traction, which caused them to slip and slide.

It's not the first time Dreyer has had to contend with ice. He once competed in a canoe race in Sweden; 17km before the finish, the river had frozen. He had to drag his canoe, and deal with ice crumbling around him every few hundred metres. (Much like the English rugby team, the river was full of ice holes.)

"How awesome is this?" thought Dreyer. If that sounds wrong, adjust your mindset: Dreyer knew the tough conditions would mean that



A DOOZIE OF A RIDE: Freedom Challenge record holder, Evereester and all-round tough guy Martin 'Dusi Duke' Dreyer says quitting is not an option.

half the field would bail. Adversity, he reckons, is the breakfast of champions. "I enjoy it when it gets tough – not because I've got a sick mentality, but because it's an opportunity to get ahead of the curve."

And according to Dreyer, the way to get ahead is to constantly test your limits, and redefine them. Which is why he entered the 2012 Freedom Challenge, going head-to-head with Harris in an exciting 10-day duel.

Dreyer had always raced in a team, but this was an event that had no limits. With no parameters, racers can ride the whole day if they choose to – and Dreyer chose to. "I didn't have a strategy. I just rode into the sunset. I didn't know how hard I could push myself." It was one of those opportunities to redefine his limits, he says; and like Harris, he decided to skimp on sleep.

His motivation to keep moving was his children: his son Callum was three, and his daughter Ruby was just two weeks old. "When I could hardly keep my eyes open I would think of my kids, and I'd tell myself I didn't want them to read one day about how their dad gave up. I didn't want to disappoint them. I wanted them to read a successful story..."

(Ruby and Callum, I'm not sure if you can read yet, but here's one of many successful stories about your dad: he *didn't* bail from the 2012 Freedom Challenge. In fact, he conquered it, and set a new record.)

Toughness, says Dreyer, is relative. After doing the Freedom Challenge he decided to test his limits once more, and entered the Colorado Trail Race – 900km, 21 000m of elevation gain, winding through the Rocky Mountains – and found it even tougher than the Freedom Challenge. "The Freedom Challenge didn't have altitude; and even though it was tough, I still got TLC and a warm bed for the few hours I slept. In the Colorado Trail Race you sleep next to your bike, wake up, and ride on. The hills were also so steep, and the summit so far... it was too far to think of it as a goal." Once again, Dreyer had to redefine his limits.

Now, he's redefining his limits yet again. "I have a young family, and I don't get too caught up in racing anymore. I have learnt to love the things that can love you back – your family and friends."

TRUE GRIT Endurance athletes like Harris and Dreyer are mentally tough, and do battle



TRUE GRIT: Yolande Speedy battled excruciating pain to get to the finish line at the 2013 Cape Epic.

with their minds to keep going. But enduring physical pain is a whole new level of tough.

True grit has a name – Yolande Speedy. On the second-last day of the 2013 Cape Epic, close to halfway, she and teammate Catherine Williamson were in the lead when a momentary lapse of concentration on a descent caused Speedy to catapult over her handlebars. She landed on her left shoulder. "I knew something wasn't great, because it was one of the few times I haven't worried about my bike first."

Speedy was in serious pain. She had to lift her left hand onto the handlebar with her right hand, making getting back on the bike an excruciating process. But she persevered.

Going over bumps was agony, and hampered their pace. The pair were overtaken by the second and third ladies' teams, and Speedy was worried she wouldn't be able to ride the

40km to the end of the stage.

"At the halfway water-point I got some paracetamol tablets, which were a lifesaver, and we were able to up our pace. I was happy to see the finish line, and my focus then changed to worrying about the extent of my injuries."

And extensive they were. She had broken two ribs and a collarbone.

That's when Speedy's highly competitive (or stubborn?) nature kicked in. "I didn't want to let Cath down, and badly wanted to hold on to our hard-fought lead. I resolved to fight any decision to stop us lining up at the start the next day. I said I'd walk the stage if I had to."

When the race doctor realised the extent of her injuries, he advised her not to continue; but finally, to her huge relief, she was given the go-ahead.

Speedy took a couple of Myprodol and put

THE SCIENCE OF TOUGHENING UP...

SHIFT THE FOCUS

Pain is uncomfortable, but the power is yours to give in to it or ignore it, says

Alex Harris. "You can block it out by reminding yourself of the basic fact that it's just physiological – and then shift your focus away from the pain to something more positive. Give yourself something compelling to look forward to: the next water point, an improvement in weather, or even that you'll be able to get off your bike and relax."

NEVER GIVE UP

Martin Dreyer's mantra is 'giving up is not an option'. "If you think of it like that, then unless it's life-threatening, there's no reason to give up. When you've resolved that finishing is the goal, you'll be able to complete any challenge." Of course, he adds, you have to do your homework. You have to do the training – and his advice is, don't shy away from tough times.

When the conditions are horrendous in training, people tend to bail. But according to Dreyer, that's exactly when you shouldn't, because you could face those same conditions on race day. "If it happens, that's awesome, because you've already had a dress rehearsal. You've had tough practice," he says

FOCUS ON THE SMALL THINGS

Yolande Speedy maintains that when she's trained to be in great physical condition and has the burning desire to succeed, then it comes naturally for her to push through the pain.

"Having said that, it's important to listen to your body and trust the little voice in your head. You don't always have to push yourself to the limit. Pushing through physical injuries or illness could cause permanent damage... and medals, eventually, start collecting dust."

When it comes to pushing through mental barriers, Speedy often talks to herself – telling herself to HTFU and take the burn, as most probably everyone else is going through it too. "I also try, as Paul Cordes taught me, to focus on the small things – like posture on the bike, pedal-stroke efficiency, and keeping a high cadence. Often when you're under pressure these things take a slide, and when you correct them, you can get back on pace."

some more in her back pocket (they've been given the green light from the SA Institute of Drug-Free Sport), had her shoulder strapped, and made her way to the start. But she couldn't lift her arm, so getting on and off the bike and going over bumps was extremely painful.

"Cath would ask me how much pain I was in, on a scale of 1 to 10; and for the first half, it kept under about 6. But I started to feel it more and more, and decided to take some Myprodol. After searching my pockets, I realised they had bounced out! I just had to suck it up."

At one point Speedy climbed gingerly off her bike to walk a technical singletrack, and a supporter shouted: "Come on, ride – it's not that scary!" Speedy had a good chuckle.

She says two things got her through the pain: the adrenaline from knowing that the women's 2013 Cape Epic title was in her grasp, and her supportive partner. "Catherine has to be one of the toughest people I know. From day two, she rode with stitches in her elbow holding together a cut right down to the bone, the result of a crash. She didn't complain once. After my crash she pretty much told me to HTFU and carry on..."

Of course, Speedy's sheer guts and determination played a role too – and watching her cross the finish line that day was a goosebump moment for many.

LEARN TO BE TOUGH Harris, Dreyer and Speedy don't see themselves as superhuman

DO THEY IN FACT HAVE SOMETHING HARDWIRED IN THEIR DNA THAT MAKES THEM SUPERHUMAN?

– they're humble people, who just won't give in without a fight. But do they in fact have something hardwired in their DNA that *makes* them superhuman?

Dr Garrath Rosslee, an industrial psychologist who coaches athletes to enhance their performance, thinks the answer is definitely... maybe. "In my opinion they *are* in a sense superhuman, in that they do what few others can do. But when you break it down into its component parts, we find that their achievement comes from many hours of training, and an almost equal amount of time

doing intelligence work like strategy, learning, scenarios and decision-making. They have meticulous plans and detailed programmes, and are almost compulsive about what they do. Some even see it as a 'higher-order' or 'spiritual' component."

The good news, says Rosslee, is that you too can learn to be tough – if you're prepared to put in the hard yards. "It's difficult, time-consuming and resource-sapping," he warns.

One useful quality for the path to toughness is resilience, a gift Rosslee would like to give every human being – and something we already have, thanks to our birthright.

"I believe South Africans are one of the most resilient nations – although I can't prove it. Our history has provided us with the skills and attitude to overcome barriers, and to see obstacles as temporary bumps along the way."

Clinton Gahwiler, a sports psychologist at the Sports Science Institute of SA, believes that some people have an inherently higher pain threshold (both physically and emotionally), and agrees with Rosslee that it's absolutely possible to learn to be tougher – if you're motivated enough to put up with the discomfort, both physical and mental, of (among other things) 'deliberate practice'.

"Toughness or resilience can be developed through deliberate practice," he says. "Normally we talk about this in the context of sports psychology, but actually it's the psychology of

human performance."

Speedy says if you'd asked her a year ago where she gets her toughness from, she'd have said growing up with older brothers, a competitive twin sister, and parents who brought their children up to be tough.

"Now I realise it's also in our genes. My dad was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer last year, and the strength he and my mom have shown has been completely inspirational," she says.

But as the shrinks observe, your genes alone won't make you tough: to HTFU, you need to practise being tough. ■

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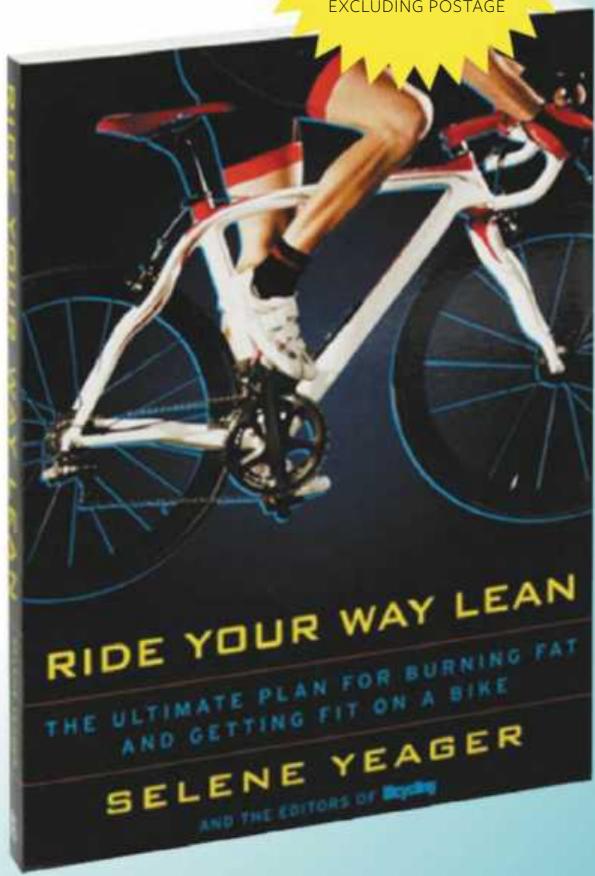
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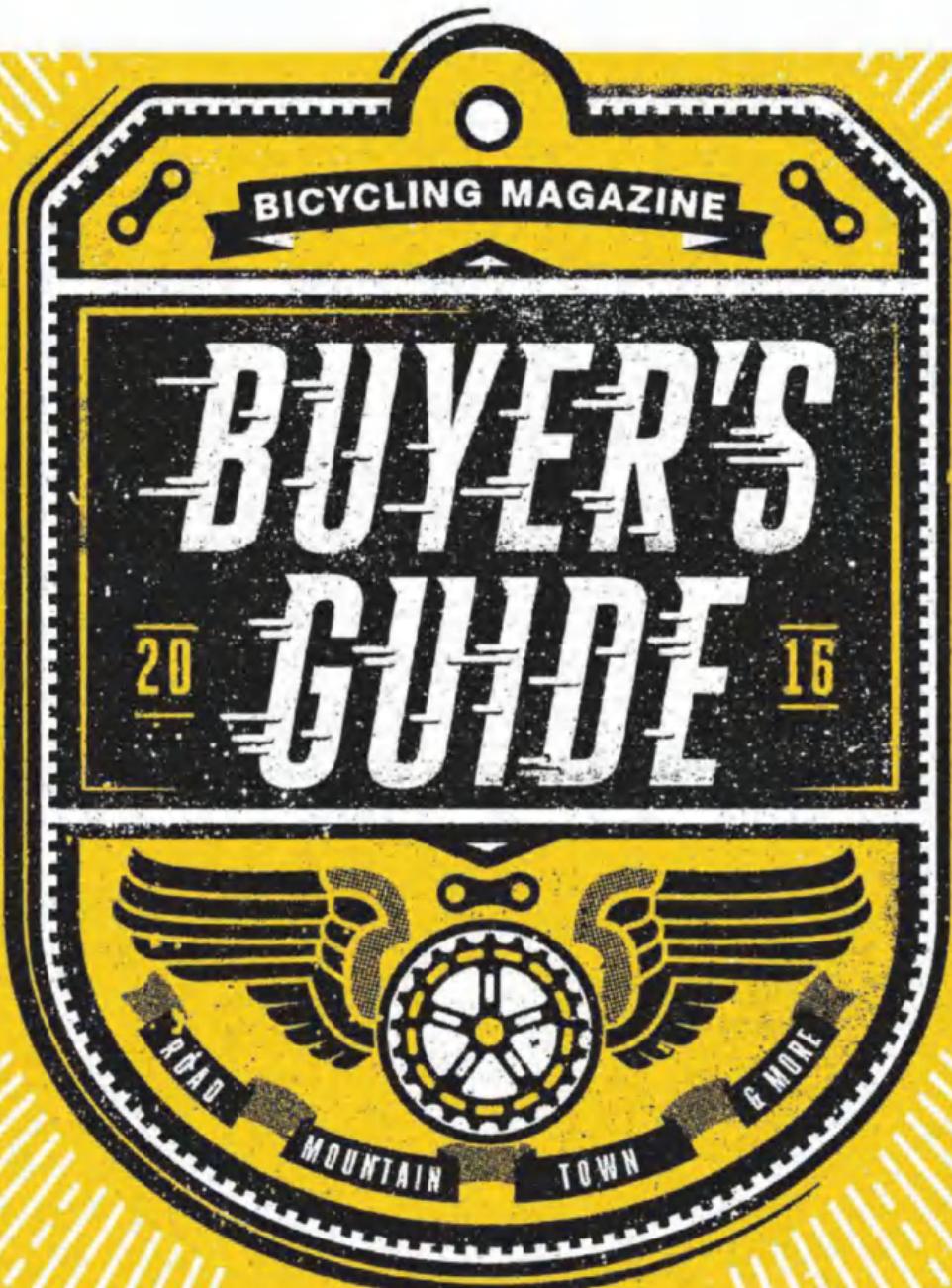
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25 ROAD

BEST BUY 54 LIV AVAIL 3

56 MERIDA SCULTURA 300

57 GT GTS EXPERT TIAGRA

ENDURANCE

58 PINARELLO DOGMA K8-S

60 CANNONDALE SYNAPSE CARBON ULTEGRA

61 BIANCHI INFINITO CV

RACE

62 GIANT TCR ADVANCED PRO 1

64 CANNONDALE CAAD12 DISC 105

66 KTM REVELATOR PRESTIGE DI2

67 SWIFT HYPERVOX

68 SCOTT FOIL 30

ADVENTURE

69 NINER BSB 9 RDO 3-STAR RIVAL HYDRO

CUSTOM

71 MERCER HAND-BUILT STEEL FRAME

73 MOUNTAIN

BEST BUY

74 SPECIALIZED ROCKHOPPER COMP 29

76 MERIDA JULIET 7500

76 TITAN 29ER ELITE

77 MOMSEN AL229

RACE

78 SCOTT SPARK

80 MERIDA NINETY-SIX 7000

82 PYGA STAGE

83 SPECIALIZED S-WORKS CAMBER 29

84 MOMSEN VIPA XT

85 SPECIALIZED STUMPJUMPER HT EXPERT CARBON 29 WORLD CUP

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93 HAIBIKE SDURO HARDNINE RC

84



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MERIDA SCULTURA 300

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Constructed from 6066 triple-butted and formed aluminium, the Scultura 300 features smooth welding and internal cable routing for a clean finish, while flex stays translate into a more compliant ride experience. A nice touch is the carbon fork, which improves compliance on harsher surfaces while also improving braking and lateral stiffness. As with others at this price point, a 10-speed Shimano Tiagra drivetrain with compact crankset ensures crisp shifting – and great value.



GT GTS EXPERT TIAGRA

RACE-WINNING PEDIGREE

PRICE R12 495

In 2013, Nolan Hoffman (racing for Team Abantu) stormed to victory – in both the Cape Town Cycle Tour and Amashova road races – aboard a top-of-the-range GT. This race-winning pedigree will have filtered through the GT range, with the GTS Tiagra offering a well-rounded package that's an ideal entry point for those looking to get into the sport without spending too much cash. The spec is well thought out, with a Shimano Tiagra drivetrain providing hassle-free shifting. You'll be glad to hear that the carbon fork helps reduce vibration up front.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ◆ A GREAT VALUE OPTION FOR BEGINNERS ◆ SHIMANO TIAGRA GROUPSET ENSURES CRISP SHIFTING AND SHARP BRAKING
- ◆ SUPPLIER: OMNICO.CO.ZA

ENDURANCE

X

FORE

In 2005 Trek unveiled Suspension Performance Advantage, offering 13mm of rear-end compliance. Used in the 2005 and 2006 Paris-Roubaix by Team Discovery, it was never brought to market.





PINARELLO DOGMA K8-S

SMOOTH OUT ANYTHING THE ROAD THROWS AT YOU

PRICE R160 000

RIDDEN

The Dogma K8-S, developed with Jaguar, is no ordinary bike. Designed to take the edge off the brutally harsh cobbles of northern Europe in races like Tour of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix, it features the aerodynamic front triangle of the award-winning F8 twinned with a shock-equipped rear

triangle, providing 10mm of travel.

Testing revealed that for us mere mortals, the K8-S does a superb job of cancelling out everyday road chatter, effectively reducing the impact from potholes, drain covers and other energy-sapping bumps in the road. And if you're lucky enough to be visiting northern Europe, it will undoubtedly make the fabled cobbles of the early-season classics a little easier on your body.

In principle, the Dogma Suspension System 1.0 (DSS) is relatively simple. Thanks to its 'flat' chainstays, the rear end of the K8-S allows for up to 10mm of flex, eliminating the need for a (heavy) linkage system – an approach similar to that of Cannondale's SAVE micro-suspension technology. The small elastomer-based shock, which facilitates the flex, is moulded into the top of the seatstays and bolts onto the seat tube, creating a neat package that allows the frame to weigh in at under 1kg (for a size 53).

Although 10mm doesn't sound like a lot, when you're riding for hours on end a few millimetres of compliance goes along way towards helping you end your ride with a spring in your step rather than an appointment with your chiropractor!

On the road, I was convinced I

CONTINUED ON PAGE 60

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- IDENTICAL FRONT TRIANGLE
- DOGMA F8 WITH SHOCK-EQUIPPED REAR TRIANGLE
- ELASTOMER PROVIDES UP TO 10MM OF DAMPING WITHOUT COMPROMISING REAR-END STIFFNESS
- SUPPLIER: ASGSport.co.za

ENDURANCE

AWARD-WINNING F8 AERO FRONT TRIANGLE AND A SHOCK-EQUIPPED REAR TRIANGLE, FOR 10MM OF TRAVEL.

would feel the sway of the rear end under heavy acceleration, as well as while cornering. But after numerous sprints and descents, my legs had given up before I could detect any flex or energy leakage from the rear end. In a nutshell, the DSS 1.0 won't cost you extra watts.

With the stability of the rear end proven, we needed to see just how active the elastomer really was. With an O-ring on the shock's shaft, we threw everything at the bike, from a rough 3km paved section on Green Point

Promenade, to a 'point and shoot' strategy that saw us hit every bump in the road. Under normal pedalling on a smooth road the O-ring didn't move. But when it was called into action, the O-ring promptly shifted up the shaft, showing us in no uncertain terms that the DSS 1.0 was absorbing some of the knocks for us.

The K8-S shares many characteristics with the Dogma F8 – so why wouldn't you opt for the smoother, more comfortable K8-S, which offers better traction and control?



If it's good enough to get the Cannondale Pro Cycling riders over the cobbles of northern Europe, it's certainly good enough for you to make mincemeat of South Africa's rough roads.

Featuring what Cannondale call 'Synapse Endurance Race Geometry', the Synapse is the American brand's smoothest, most comfortable frameset yet. Comparing it to the more aggressive SuperSix Evo frameset, all Synapses are designed with longer seatstays, slacker head angles and slightly longer head tubes, culminating in a riding position aimed more at comfort than break-neck racing (pun intended.)

Available in disc and non-disc versions, the carbon lay-up of the Synapse is based on SAVE Plus Micro-suspension tech. Built into the fork, rear triangle and 25.4mm seat post and seat tube, its primary goal is to reduce road buzz by absorbing and dissipating energy on rough roads – and to improve traction over bumps, for better handling and control.

Standard on this Ultegra-equipped bump-buster are 28C tyres, for even more comfort and traction while cornering.

CANNONDALE SYNAPSE CARBON ULTEGRA

BUMP-BUSTING RIDE

PRICE R40 000

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
→ GEOMETRY FOCUSED ON ALL-DAY COMFORT
→ A 25.4MM SEAT POST
IMPROVES RIDE QUALITY
→ AVAILABLE IN BOTH DISC AND NON-DISC VERSIONS
→ SUPPLIER: OMNICO.CO.ZA





BIANCHI INFINITO CV

GOOD VIBRATIONS

PRICE R64 299

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

► THE INFINITO CV'S COUNTERVAIL MATERIAL CANCELS UP
TO 75% OF ENERGY-SAPPING VIBRATIONS ► SPECCHED WITH
25C VITTORIA RUBINO PRO TYRES ► SUPPLIER: JJCYCLING.CO.ZA

Endurance road bikes aim to offer a slightly less aggressive riding position (making them well suited to less flexible riders), as well as a more comfortable ride experience, by soaking up as much road buzz as possible. The latter is generally achieved through specific carbon lay-ups

or alloy tube construction that absorbs and/or dissipates the energy-sapping vibrations coming from bad road surfaces.

The Infinito CV's carbon lay-up is embedded with layers of patented vibration-cancelling material Bianchi call Countervail. This cancels out up to 75% of all vibrations that would normally

be transferred directly from the road to your body. It results in reduced muscle fatigue and increased energy saving, and helps to maximise control and handling when the going gets rough. Infinito CVs are available in a range of builds – the spec featured is known as a Campagnolo Athena 11sp compact.



ALL-DAY COMFORT

Not all road bikes are designed with pure speed in mind. Endurance models have less aggressive geometries, and are built using technologies such as Trek's IsoDecoupler, Pinarello's Elastomer Damper, Bianchi's Countervail and Specialized's Zertz Inserts, to offer all-day comfort rather than all-out speed. A smoother, more comfy ride will make you faster for longer.

RACE

WHAT YOU
NEED TO KNOW

- ◆ NOW CLAIMED TO BE THE STIFFEST PRODUCTION ROAD BIKE
- AVAILABLE ◆ CRAZY-GOOD DEAL FOR THE ADVANCED PRO 1 VERSION
- WE TESTED, WITH ULTEGRA AND CARBON CLINCHERS ◆ SURPRISINGLY COMFORTABLE
- ◆ SUPPLIER: GIANT-BICYCLES.COM





GIANT TCR ADVANCED PRO 1

THE CLASSIC

PRICE R47 995

In making its 2016 TCR, Giant focused on one goal above all: increased stiffness-to-weight ratio. So it's a bit ironic that the first thing I noticed about the new TCR was how comfortable it is; there's a new quietness to its ride. Giant's road product manager, Jon Swanson, admitted that ride quality was secondary, but pointed out that in a three-hour race, nobody wants a bike

that's going to beat them up.

But about that stiffness. We generally discuss it in two areas: bottom bracket and torsion. With the BB, it's all about pedalling force, and in this area the TCR and other race frames were already strong enough to resist flex from all but the most powerful sprinters.

Torsional stiffness is a different matter. It's the twisting force on the frame from dropout to dropout. It's crucial to pedalling efficiency, and also cornering, and Giant feels torsional stiffness is like victory and long, twisty descents: you can never have too much. To boost it, Giant changed tube shapes on the TCR, notably a more tapered steerer section on the fork that seats the lower bearing higher in the head tube and distributes forces more evenly throughout the largest surface area on the frame. Giant typically shies away from making bold claims, but the company says that torsionally, the new TCR Advanced SL is the stiffest production bike available.

It's also 181 grams lighter, thanks to tighter manufacturing tolerances on the carbon lay-up. The Advanced Pro 1 we tested gets a lower grade of carbon, but still saves weight from the previous version.

One thing that didn't change, thankfully: the geometry. We've loved the handling of the TCR for as long as we can remember. It hits a sweet spot: stable enough for when you're tired, late in a long ride, but responsive enough for nervous crit racing. Descending on the new TCR, I was impressed by its balance: The stiffness never compromised control; the bike never chattered over choppy pavement in a hard turn; and in fast switchbacks, it stuck to its line without pushing to the outside.

Giant's new TCR doesn't pack the visual wow that its aero-oriented Propel does. But the company generally flies a bit under the radar compared with other brands, while still making some of the best performance bikes available. The new TCR is a welcome continuation of that lineage.

– Joe Lindsey

RACE

CANNONDALE CAAD12 DISC 105

LONG LIVE ALUMINIUM

PRICE R28 000

RIDDEN



Despite most manufacturers picking carbon over alu as the material of choice for racing frames, Cannondale have stuck to their guns, continuing to develop and improve their CAAD range. The CAAD 12 (which replaces the CAAD 10) shares almost identical geometry to Cannondale's flagship carbon SuperSix EVO Hi-Mod frames,

making it a thoroughbred racer.

Bicycling rode the Ultegra-spec'd CAAD 12 Disc late last year, and we were blown away by its overall capability. It simply did everything well. The ride was so enticing that we chose to celebrate aluminium (in a carbon-dominated world), voting it our Bike of the Year.

For the Bike Buyer's Guide we opted to put the lower-spec'd, Shimano 105-equipped

CAAD 12 through its paces and see if it too would be a pleasure to ride – and critically, how it would handle at race pace.

With the Ultegra and 105 models sharing identical frames, it became a battle of the build kits – would the lower spec make a difference to handling and ride quality?

Although discs are taking their time
CONTINUED ON PAGE 66



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ◆ ACCELERATES LIKE A ROCKET, TURNS ON A TICKY
- AT SPEED RACEWORTHY BUT AFFORDABLE
- ◆ SHIMANO DISC BRAKES ARE POWERFUL AND RELIABLE ◆ SUPPLIER: OMNICO.CO.ZA



STOPPING POWER

Heading into 2015, the cycling world was ablaze with the imminent arrival of disc-brake-equipped road bikes, billed as the next big thing for road riders. We were told that much as they have for mountain bikers, discs would improve braking performance, handling and control for roadies, ultimately making your ride safer.

With 2016 upon us, disc brakes haven't made inroads into the market to the degree we thought they would. But now that the UCI has legalised their use in the pro peloton, expect to see a lot more discs on the road.

**EVEN
NUMBERS
FOR THE WIN**

Cannondale were so impressed with the improvements engineers were able to make on the CAAD 10, they unanimously decided to skip number '11' and call the new model the CAAD 12.

penetrating our market (they're best suited to monster Alpine or Pyrenean descents), I'm becoming more and more of a fan. This CAAD 12 features a Shimano IceTech brakeset paired to 160mm rotors that allowed for feathering to manoeuvre through the group, but also proved completely reliable when needing to stop abruptly for a mischievous taxi or pedestrian.

Shimano have deployed their technological trickle-down well – the 105 is no longer a 'fun-rider' groupset, but a precise, great-value option for aspiring racers. To make this a proper race machine and get the most out of the CAAD 12 chassis, we'd upgrade the wheelset to something lighter and faster – although for a sub-R30k bike, the wheels supplied are not to be scoffed at.

With its razor-sharp handling and aggressive geometry, twinned with a bulletproof build kit, the CAAD 12 Disc 105 punches above its price weight.



KTM REVELATOR PRESTIGE DI2

WHERE'S THE THROTTLE?

PRICE R98 000

**WHAT YOU
NEED TO KNOW**

- KTM'S FLAGSHIP MODEL OFFERS A NO-NONSENSE SPEC FOR MAXIMUM PERFORMANCE → REAR BRAKE IS NOW TUCKED AWAY UNDERNEATH THE CHAINSTAYS → SUPPLIER: KTM-BIKES.CO.ZA



Though better known for their motorbikes, in fact KTM have been building bicycles since 1964, giving the company 52 years of experience in the industry. The local agents beam with pride when telling us that every KTM, from entry-level hardtails to this top-end full-carbon road racer, is built in Austria.

The Revelator range is KTM's flagship racing frameset, with the Prestige Di2 being the highest-specced model. A high-performance carbon lay-up in the frame and fork ensure crisp handling and acceleration, on par with other leading models. For 2016, the rear brake is now mounted below the chainstays, making way for a redesigned seat-post junction and seat stays that offer better airflow and aerodynamics, as well as stiffer rear stays.



RIDDEN

SWIFT HYPERVOX

WORTH ALL THE HYPE

PRICE R105 000

Can you make us a bike that rides, handles and accelerates like the Ultravox, but is slightly more aero?" This was the question posed to SwiftCarbon by the Drapac Professional Cycling team during the 2015 season. Essentially, the guys wanted all the advantages of the Ultravox, coupled with improved aerodynamics – but without any of the compromises that arise from 'going aero'.

SwiftCarbon's answer is the Hypervox, this passionate company's next-generation frameset. Interestingly though, SwiftCarbon don't have plans to cull the Ultravox (its best-selling frameset) from the range – the Hypervox will simply slot into the self-proclaimed 'aero without compromise' category, which we imagine is a step up from the Ultravox's 'race-light' category.

This isn't the first time SwiftCarbon have engineered a bike's ride traits to mimic an existing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 68

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- DESIGNED TO BE THE ULTIMATE ALL-ROUND RACE MACHINE → OUT ON THE ROAD, THE HYPERVOX'S EYE-CATCHING PAINTJOB GOT THE MOST OOHHS AND AAHHS OF ANY OF THE BIKES WE RODE → SUPPLIER: SWIFTCARBON.COM



TUBE PROFILES AND JUNCTIONS HAVE ALL BEEN TWEAKED AND 'KAMMTAILED' TO SAVE PRECIOUS WATTS.

offering. The Evil Twin dual-sus geometry mirrors that of the D-Vore hardtail – and after riding the 2015 Cape Epic on an Evil Twin, I can attest to Swift's ability to maintain a superbly racy feel, while updating technology and frame construction.

The bike you see here is the first-ever production Hypervox to leave the factory – a worldwide exclusive for *Bicycling*. So it was with great excitement that I suited up, fastened my BOAs and hit the tarmac on the Hypervox's maiden voyage.

Having spent the past year riding and racing an Ultravox, I was hesitant to simply say that newer must be better. I love my Ultravox – but I'm afraid, after a few days on the Hypervox, my heart had been stolen. It's everything you want from a racing thoroughbred.

Aero gains have been made subtly. Fork legs and head tube have been smoothed off and narrowed and the seat clamp neatened up, while tube profiles and junctions have all been tweaked and 'kammtailed' to save precious watts. Another change is the carbon

lay-up. Tensile fibres (ultra-strong, to ensure stiffness) have been blended with modulus fibres (more forgiving, for damping) so as to maximise ride quality. Frame weight is 900g, which won't set any records; but that's not SwiftCarbon's goal with the Hypervox – they've gone for ride quality over extreme lightness or aerodynamics.

Testing revealed incredible handling with steering being super-direct, for pinpoint accuracy – much like the Ultravox, but better. The highlight for me was the bike's power transfer. Paired with the 50mm Black Inc blackFIFTY wheelset, the Hypervox accelerates like a rocket ship. I had no way of measuring it out on the road, but it was difficult to feel any flex or loss of power.

As ever, the Shimano Di2 sets the benchmark for shifting power, accuracy and reliability, while the super-stiff Zipp cockpit was uncompromising. The cherry on the top is the exquisite paint job, which got more than a few compliments out on the road.

This 6.9kg beauty is a racer's dream; just hope your legs can do it justice.

Ahighlight of Scott's 2016 line-up is the Swiss brand's aero road bike, the Foil. Débuted in 2010, this second-gen frameset has been tweaked into a lighter, more aerodynamic, stiffer, and – importantly – more comfortable package.

Scott's brand manager says they strove for balance – improved aero, first and foremost, but also addressing the hard ride the Foil has been criticised for in the past.

Engineers focused on improving the Foil's vertical compliance, which now allows the full-carbon frame to better soak up road vibrations without compromising lateral stiffness. New tube profiles have improved the Foil's real-world aerodynamic performance, while the BB, headset and front fork have all been stiffened, thanks to a refined carbon lay-up. The Foil frameset is available with either a Shimano 105 groupset (featured), or Ultegra, which will cost you a few grand more.

SCOTT FOIL 30

SUPREMELY AERO

PRICE R38 000

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- SMOOTHER, FASTER RIDE
- COMPARED TO PREVIOUS MODEL
- SHIMANO 105 SPEC BALANCES PERFORMANCE AND VALUE
- SUPPLIER: SCOTT-SPORTS.COM



RIDDEN

NINER BSB 9 RDO 3-STAR RIVAL HYDRO

GO
(LITERALLY) ANYWHERE

PRICE R48 199



A few weeks ago, *Bicycling* received a squeaky-clean BSB 9 RDO, with a handwritten note from Niner asking for it to be returned covered in dust, mud, and if possible, a few squished bugs on the fork legs or handlebars. Challenge accepted!

Before we get cracking on the ride experience though, let's just make sense of the acronyms that describe this full-carbon cyclo-cross weapon. BSB stands for 'Blood, Sweat and Beers', while RDO stands for 'Race-Day Optimised'.

BSB pays homage to the culture of cyclo-cross lap racing in the US and Europe, which involves thousands of rowdy spectators consuming large quantities of beer as riders endure a lot of pain racing their guts out.

RDO refers to Niner's aggressive, race-specific geometry, which is built into all of their race-specific framesets.

Putting the BSB 9 through its paces reminded me of how accustomed we are to the notion that drop bars and skinny tyres are for on-road riding only. With the growth in 'cross' bikes (aka 'gravel-grinders'), there is an entire unpaved

CONTINUED ON PAGE 70



YOU ARE WHAT YOU DRINK

We love Niner's patented YAWYD top cap that perfectly fits your favourite beer bottle's crown, providing some extra motivation when the lactic is burning.



THERE IS AN ENTIRE UNPAVED WORLD WAITING TO BE EXPLORED.

world waiting to be explored.

As I careered down a gravel road descent into Hout Bay, I thought, "Hang on, I shouldn't be riding on the dirt with a drop bar and skinny tyres... where's my suspension?" But the capability of the BSB 9 RDO, with its thru-axles, 33C Schwalbe Sammy Slick tyres and SRAM disc brakes, allows you to tackle almost any terrain with confidence. It's refreshing and liberating.

Over the course of the review, I

rode flat-out on tar, where it was quick and responsive thanks to the RDO geometry; I pushed it hard on open gravel roads trying to find the limit of grip, traction and control, and it never let me down; and for good measure, we took it through some light singletrack and a river. No matter what we threw at the BSB 9, it simply asked for more.

Perhaps Niner should change the meaning of BSB to 'Bloody Sweet Bike'?

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ◆ TACKLE ANY ROAD, WITH RDO CARBON LAY-UP AND 33C TYRES ◆ FRONT AND REAR THRU-AXLES FOR ADDED STIFFNESS ◆ DISC-ONLY FRAMESET ◆ SUPPLIER: NINER.CO.ZA

ADVENTURE

In 2016 and beyond, gravel won't be the exclusive domain of mountain bikers. Thanks to a new breed of road cycle, known as a 'gravel-grinder' or 'CX' bike, roadies and mountain bikers alike have a new tool for venturing into new territory – with drop bars and relatively skinny tyres. You'll never look at gravel the same way again.



MERCER HAND-BUILT STEEL FRAME

HAND-BUILT
WITH
A HEARTBEAT

HAND-BUILT FRAMES
FROM R17 000

Adream bike means different things to different people. For racing snakes, it may be the latest and lightest carbon road or mountain bike, decked out with a snazzy electronic drivetrain. For others, it could be a bespoke custom steel frame designed and hand-built for you and only you, where each and every detail from the diameter of the tubing to the frame's geometry is in your hands.

As if from a bygone era, about 20 to 30 Mercer steel frames are built every year by Dave Mercer in a shed in his

back garden. From start to finish, the process is a conversation between Mercer and the frame's owner, ensuring the end result is something spectacular – and of course, unique to the customer's specifications.

Mercer uses various types of Columbus tubing, which he sources from the factory in Italy, as the core of each frame. How exactly he goes about constructing and brazing the frame all depends on what the customer has in mind... if you can dream it, Dave Mercer can build it!

Once the frame has been meticulously

CONTINUED ON PAGE 72





WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

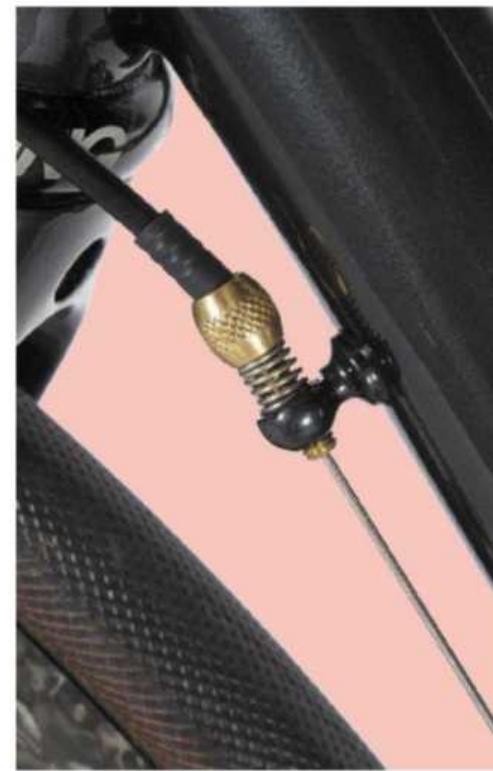
- ◆ MERCER USES COLUMBUS LIFE TUBING, DIRECT FROM ITALY.
- ◆ FROM GEOMETRY TO LUGGING, EVERY ELEMENT OF THE FRAME IS CUSTOMISABLE.
- ◆ SUPPLIER: MERCERBIKES.CO.ZA

brazed by hand for the final time, it's sent for painting – another cog in the process that adds personal flair (and in many cases, eccentricity) to the frame.

With the artwork dried, a carbon fork is usually fitted along with the customer's desired build kit. Understandably, turnaround times vary depending on the nature of the project.

This pearlescent charcoal frame, named Themba (every Mercer sports a brass name plate), is fully constructed from Columbus Life tubing and features an oversized 38mm downtube and 'straight' 44mm head tube, allowing it to accept a modern carbon fork with tapered steerer tube. 'Themba' also features a few hand-carved details, like a custom seat sleeve and short, tapered chainstays that give the bike a lively, exciting feel.

I left Mercer's garden shed dreaming of a frame called 'Pinner', which I hope will one day become a reality.



YOUR FRAME, YOUR NAME

Every Mercer frame is personally named by its owner and celebrated with a brass badge that is brazed on to the bottom bracket. This is the one and only Themba on the planet.



MOUNTAIN

CONQUER THE TRAIL

2016

PUMP UP THE TRAIL, DOMINATE YOUR NEXT
RACE, AND EXPLORE NEW TERRITORY ON THESE
EXCEPTIONALLY CAPABLE RIDES.



BEST BUY

RIDDEN

SPECIALIZED ROCKHOPPER COMP 29

PRO PERFORMANCE ON A
JOURNEYMAN'S BUDGET

PRICE R11 799

BORN IN THE 80S

Like its more famous cousin, the Stumpjumper, the humble Rockhopper hardtail was born in the late 80s and has enjoyed over 20 years of refinement. The lively ride experience is testament to this.

After only a few minutes on this sub-R12 000 hardtail I was in a great mood, happily pedalling towards Table Mountain and its mix of loose gravel roads and rocky singletrack. I hadn't even hit the dirt, and already I was stoked.

Despite falling into the budget category, the Rockhopper handles like a bike double its price. The geometry is spot-on, balanced to the point that you can rail it through turns and not expect any nasty surprises.

A short stem and wide, 730mm handlebar add to the comfortable

riding position, going a long way towards helping me to keep the handling precise, and increasing the leverage, making turning at slow speeds a cinch. Specialized have clearly transferred their frame-building expertise from the likes of the Stumpjumper hardtail and Epic dual-suspension platforms to create a value-for-money offering that's hard to beat.

Taking care of business up front is a custom 100mm SR Suntour XCR 32 fork that's been developed by Specialized for Suntour. It features an updated 'Multi Circuit' damping

system that allows for progressive damping, as opposed to simply open or locked-out. In this price range, the fork's performance is way above average.

Although not tubeless-ready, the wire-bead 29er Ground Control tyres offer the same tread pattern as the more expensive versions, giving the Rockhopper Comp sturdy, consistent grip. Nevertheless, upgrading to tubeless would still be a worthwhile investment.

If you're looking for a race-ready mountain bike that won't break the bank, this may be your best bet.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ◆ BALANCED GEOMETRY MAKES FOR A SUPERB RIDE
- ◆ A CUSTOM SUNTOUR FRONT FORK IMPROVES HANDLING
- ◆ SUPPLIER: SPECIALIZED.COM



MERIDA JULIET 7 500

ROMEO'S JULIET

PRICE R13 999

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ◆ 650B WHEELS GIVE RIDERS THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS
- ◆ WOMEN-SPECIFIC
- ◆ SUPPLIER: MERIDA-BIKES.COM

In 2016, engineers at Merida were able to lower the swoop in the Juliet's top-tube, further reducing the stand-over height and making getting on and off even easier – especially in those unplanned emergency stops when the terrain gets a bit tricky. The frame has been designed with internal cable routing, making for a very neat look. The 27.5" wheels are specced with Maxxis Ikon tyres, while a triple chainring offers more than enough gearing for any challenge.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ◆ FEATURING A GREAT SPEC, IT WON'T LET YOU DOWN
- ◆ SUPPLIER: TITANRACINGBIKES.COM



TITAN 29R ELITE

BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

PRICE R13 999

The 29R Elite is a great option if you're looking for an affordable performance hardtail. The 2x10 Shimano SLX groupset is a proven system that offers crisp, reliable shifting. With a 180mm disc up front, and 160mm at the rear, the Shimano hydraulic brakeset's performance is sure to be sharp and pinpoint-accurate, while a set of high-volume 2.25" Schwalbe Racing Ralph tyres, a popular choice at the Cape Epic, will keep you in touch with the trail.

BEST BUY

MOMSEN AL229

YOUR
PERFECT FIRST
BIKE

PRICE R10 250

Reports from Momsen HQ are that the AL229 has been one of their best sellers since arriving at stores late last year. It's a great entry-level mountain bike to get you motivated about the outdoors. Sporting SR Suntour XCR32 suspension, 29er wheels and a triple-chainring crankset, the AL229 is capable of taking you on more than just a gravel road.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ➔ AFFORDABLE ENTRY POINT INTO MTB
- ➔ TRIPLE CHAINRING HELPS YOU COPE ON ANY CLIMB
- ➔ SUPPLIER: MOMSENBIKES.COM



RACE

WHAT YOU
NEED TO KNOW

- AVAILABLE IN BOTH 27.5" AND 29"
- WHEEL SIZES • SRAM GX BRINGING
1X11 TO THE MASSES
- SUPPLIER: SCOTT-SPORTS.COM

29"



RIDDEN

SCOTT SPARK

IT HAS A SPLIT PERSONALITY.
(WE LOVE BOTH.)

PRICE R47 000

The first thing we noticed when throwing a leg over the Spark 720 was its playfulness and agility. Compared to the bigger-wheeled Spark 920, the 720's 27.5" wheels, shorter chainstays and slacken head angle allowed me to manoeuvre the bike in turns and weave through technical sections a little more easily than on the 29er version.

Admittedly, in a straight-line sprint or over a long, non-technical course, 29er wheels will generally be faster; but the 27.5" wheels shine in tight technical sections. They also climb steep hills better, thanks to their lower rotational weight.

A great element of the Spark is its adjustable chip, positioned on the rear shock mounting, which allows you to vary BB height and head angle by

7mm and 0.5 degrees respectively. If you're riding steep stuff, drop the BB height and slacken the head angle to get the most out of your ride – and visa versa for long, undulating days in the saddle.

We're big fans of Scott's patented TwinLoc technology, which allows you to switch effortlessly between three suspension settings: Lockout, Traction Control and Descend. A highlight was the new TwinLoc lever, which is integrated into the grip and tucked neatly underneath the handlebar. This change was possible due to losing the left-hand shifter, thanks to the 1x drivetrain. The TwinLoc gets five out of five.

Fox front and rear shocks are tuned perfectly for the Spark 720's 120mm of travel – paired with the Twin Loc, you have a great platform

that's firm on climbs but really plush when you need it. The middle (Traction Control) setting was ideal for loose, technical climbs, where we needed the shock to be firm, but also allow for some compliance to improve traction – and it struck the perfect balance.

Spec-wise, Scott haven't skimped. The newly released SRAM GX drivetrain is great value for money, while the Shimano SLX brakes have benefited from the trickle-down effect, offering consistent, powerful braking. New for 2016 are shorter stems and wider handlebars across the range, which noticeably increase stability and improve handling off-road.

While styling is a personal thing, we loved the black and green colourway, with Syncros supplying colour-coded products to create an 'easy-on-the-eye' package.

A HIGHLIGHT WHILE RIDING WAS THE NEW TWINLOC LEVER, WHICH IS INTEGRATED INTO THE GRIP AND TUCKED NEATLY UNDERNEATH THE HANDLEBAR.



RACE



MERIDA NINETY-SIX 7000

NEW AND
IMPROVED

PRICE R55 000

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- ALL-NEW SUSPENSION PLATFORM OFFERS 96MM OF TRAVEL
- SPLIT WHEEL SIZING: SMALL FRAME 27.5", MED 27.5" OR 29",
LARGE & EXTRA-LARGE 29"
- SUPPLIER: MERIDA-BIKES.COM



► **D**ebuted back in 2007, Merida's Ninety-Six flagship marathon and XC race machine has received a welcome makeover for 2016 that sees a totally new suspension design, updated geometry, and a few tweaks that keep it at the cutting edge. The Ninety-Six 9 7000 features a full-carbon frame and Merida's 'Smart Entry' internal cable routing solution, which eliminates rattling by keeping cables under tension with clamps. Shimano's updated 11spd XT drivetrain is a welcome sight. While 1x set-ups are all the rage these days, a 2x11 configuration is still a great option for those looking for a wider

selection of gears to handle diverse terrain.

Interestingly, Merida will offer the Ninety-Six in two wheelsizes, depending on the frame size. Only 27.5" wheels will be available on small frames, and large and XL will feature 29" wheels only, while medium frames will be offered with either 27.5" or 29er wheels. Their thinking is based on the idea that small frames (and riders) are better suited to the characteristics of a smaller wheel, while larger riders can take full advantage of bigger hoops. We think this is a good idea. Only time will tell how the South African market will respond, given that it's currently heavily skewed towards 29ers.

RACE

WHAT YOU
NEED TO KNOW

- ➡ PHENOMENALLY CAPABLE ON ANY TERRAIN & FIVE HUB SPACING
- ➡ IMPROVES YOUR CHAIN-LINE
- ➡ FOUR BUILDS AVAILABLE
- ➡ SUPPLIER: PYGAINDUSTRIES.COM

PYGA STAGE

RIDDEN

THE SWEET
SPOT
BETWEEN FAST
AND FUN

BUILDS FROM R75 500



Pyga built the Stage – their first short-travel, marathon-specific dual suspension – specifically to handle well on descents and technical sections, while still offering a stable, efficient pedalling platform. They wanted riders to be fast, but not at the expense of loathing singletrack because of a twitchy front end or super-aggressive racing angles.

I rode an early production model in August, and loved every minute of it. Looking back at my ride notes, I wrote: “The Stage enjoys a thoroughbred racing pedigree paired with an inviting trail spirit that makes it an absolute blast to ride.” That about sums it up. The Stage is for riders looking for a fast, fun bike that will give them the confidence to push harder on singletrack.



SPECIALIZED S-WORKS CAMBER 29

THE NEW EPIC 29

PRICE R139 999



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- THIS IS THE SPECIALIZED YOU SHOULD BE RIDING
- ENOUGH SAID → SUPPLIER: SPECIALIZED.COM

Given the nature of South Africa's growing trail network, and the shift towards event routes being spoilt with singletrack, this S-Works Camber – with 120mm of travel, and a 68.5-degree head angle – represents the absolute pinnacle of Specialized's mountain-bike range.

Gone are the days of long arduous routes on open district roads, where the S-Works Epic reigned supreme. Mountain bikers in 2016 require a tool that offers a reassuring experience on the trail, while (dare I say it) being as efficient as the Epic on the ups. The Camber ticks this box.

To reinforce this message, in December *Bicycling* awarded the Camber Comp Carbon 29er the title of 2015's best mountain bike. We believe strongly that trail-friendly dual-suspensions are the way to go. You really don't need to be riding what the race winners ride – choose ride quality over anything else.

Having ridden the featured S-Works version of the Camber, I can tell you that all you need to know is that it operates... like a boss.



THE SWEET SPOT

Medium-travel dual-sus bikes have come a long way since the days of pogo-stick-like suspension. Thanks to modern technology, today's trail bikes are lightning-fast on the ups, downs, and everywhere in between. Their slacker geometry, efficient suspension and beefier tyres put them squarely in the sweet spot between all-out racer and long-travel all-mountain pinner. They'll happily descend through a technical section, but won't skip a beat when the road or trail points skywards. They're the best of both worlds.

RACE

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- VIPA FRAMESET IS COMPLEMENTED BY A STELLAR BUILD KIT • 2X11 GEARING GIVES YOU A WIDER SELECTION OF RATIOS
- SUPPLIER: MOMSENBIKES.COM



MOMSEN VIPA XT

SLITHERINGLY
FAST

PRICE R60 950

Two water-bottle cages mounted on the main frame. Sounds easy to achieve; but with some major players still unable to deliver on this feature, clearly it's not. The fact that all medium and large Vipa frames cater for two main-frame-mounted water bottles puts them in a select group of XC/marathon racing framesets that allows riders to store all their hydration where it's easy to reach. This XT version has a full-carbon frame with 80mm of rear-end travel and 100mm up front, making it perfect for long marathon and stage races – add in the two bottles, and you're on a winning wicket. As the name suggests, a full Shimano XT groupset is spec'd, with a 2x11 drivetrain offering that all-important bail-out gear for when your legs decide

CONTINUED ON PAGE 85

to implode unceremoniously. The tubeless-ready ZTR Crests are arguably South Africa's best-selling aftermarket rims, and a welcome addition to the Vipa XT build kit.

ALL MEDIUM AND LARGE VIPA FRAMES CATER FOR TWO MAIN-FRAME-MOUNTED WATER BOTTLES



SPECIALIZED STUMPJUMPER HT EXPERT CARBON 29 WORLD CUP

CALLING ALL DIE-HARD RACERS

PRICE R68 999



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

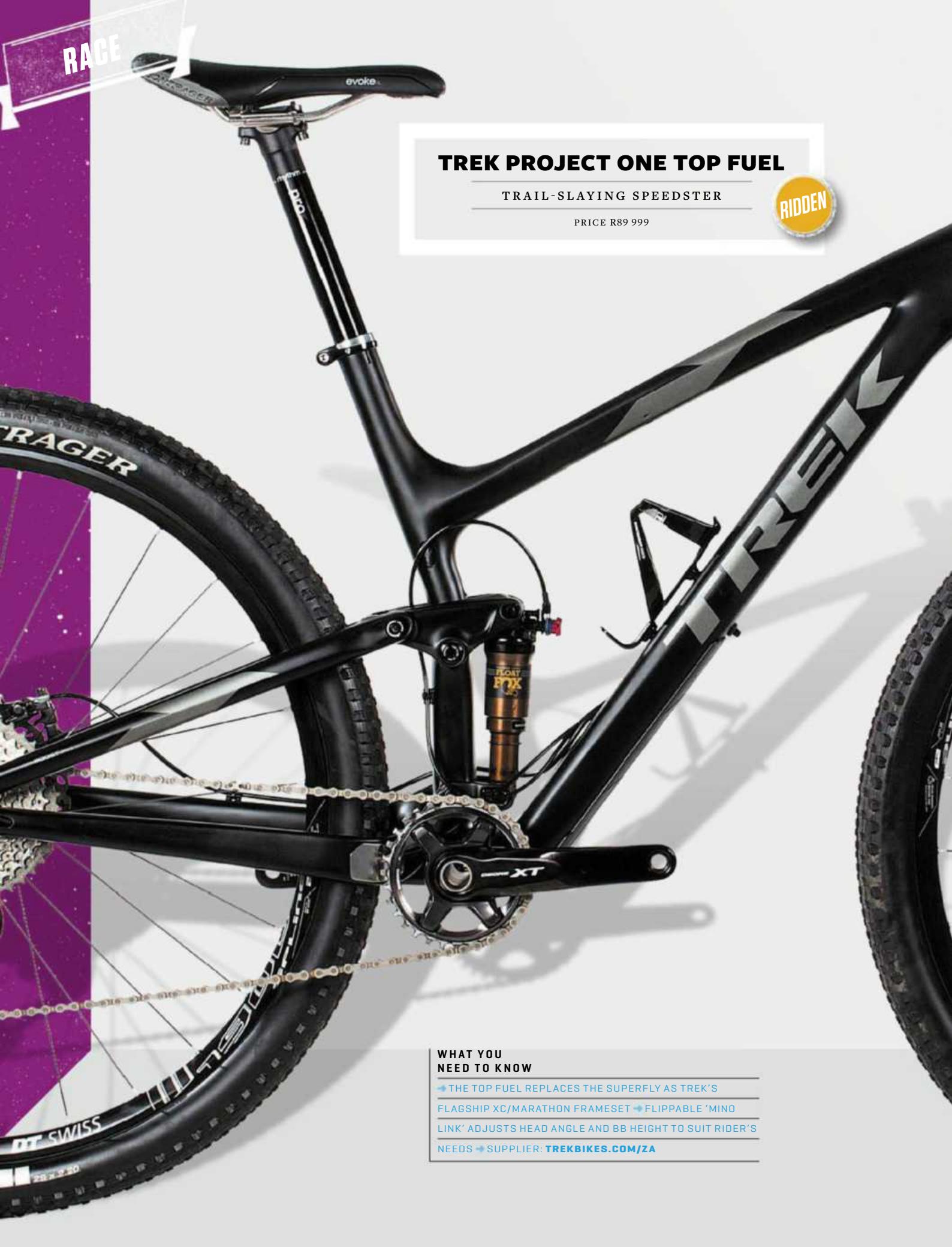
- ◆ EXPLOSIVE AND SNAPPY
- ◆ PURE RACING MACHINE
- ◆ PERFECT FOR WEIGHT WEENIES
- ◆ SUPPLIER: SPECIALIZED.COM

With modern dual-suspensions being incredibly efficient and light, they've become the go-to for most racers. There are still those, however, who swear by the humble hardtail's precise handling and snappy acceleration. With a full-carbon chassis, Specialized's World Cup XC 29 geometry, 1x11 drivetrain and a set of Roval carbon wheels, the Stumpjumper Expert Carbon is designed and built to satisfy the hardcore racer.

While a 27.5mm seatpost offers added compliance, some riders have upgraded to a cobble-gobbler seatpost (more popular on the endurance road bikes like the Roubaix), which has a built-in Zertz insert providing extra vibration-damping.

For good measure, a SWAT box and SWAT tool are standard spec, eliminating the need for you to carry those essentials in your pockets.

RACE



TREK PROJECT ONE TOP FUEL

TRAIL-SLAYING SPEEDSTER

PRICE R89 999

RIDDEN

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

► THE TOP FUEL REPLACES THE SUPERFLY AS TREK'S
FLAGSHIP XC/MARATHON FRAMESET ► FLIPPABLE 'MINO
LINK' ADJUSTS HEAD ANGLE AND BB HEIGHT TO SUIT RIDER'S
NEEDS ► SUPPLIER: TREKBIKES.COM/ZA



First introduced in 2005 but discontinued in 2012, the Top Fuel makes a welcome return to Trek's line-up in 2016 as its flagship XC/Marathon dual-suspension model.

Having shed its 26" wheels and 2x10 drivetrain, the all-new Top Fuel is modern in every sense, incorporating a lightweight carbon chassis, 29er wheels, 11spd drivetrain, adjustable geometry and wider 'boost' hub spacing – not to mention the latest Fox and RockShox suspension (depending on spec).

When designing the Top Fuel (which

replaces the SuperFly 100), engineers at Trek realised that XC and Marathon disciplines were becoming a lot more technical. Their response was a more capable XC race bike that borrowed tech from their longer-travel models.

The Top Fuel uses Trek's Mino Link, which allows you to fine-tune frame geometry. The 'offset chip' at the junction of the seatstays and the rocker link adjusts head angle and BB height. The slacker setting (head angle 70 degrees, BB height 34.1cm) was by far my favourite for day-to-day riding, as it turned the Top Fuel into a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 88



1X DRIVE- TRAINS

A 1x ('one-by') drivetrain uses a single chainring up front with a larger 'granny gear' at the rear, providing similar gear ratios to the more traditional double or triple chainring drivetrains. With Shimano XT and SRAM GX groupsets now offering 1x at a more affordable price, expect to see more of them on the mountain. But beware: you may need to experiment to find the front chainring that's sized perfectly to suit you, as the differences between gears are more pronounced.

X

ABP The Top Fuel now uses Trek's Active Braking Pivot (ABP) suspension design, using a pivot that rotates around the rear axle – the intention being to prevent braking forces from affecting the rear shock in any way.

trail-devouring speedster. The Mino Link coupled with Trek's custom G2 offset fork (which increases the fork's rake, slackening the effective head angle) really creates a stable platform, which corners and descends like a dream while still eating up the flat, rough technical sections I usually struggle on. A great all-rounder.

Contributing liveliness are 435mm chainstays, a remarkable 17mm shorter than those of the Superfly 100. Add Boost 148x12mm rear axle spacing, and you have a super-stiff, super-responsive rear-end that had me snapping out of turns and accelerating like a greyhound. This rock-solid full-carbon rear end is great for heavier riders, who usually suffer from flex.

Spec-wise, the new Shimano XT groupset is a real winner; brakes are razor-sharp and predictable, while

the new 11-42T cassette is a welcome addition to Shimano's 1x drivetrains. A set of 29x2.2" XR2 Bontrager tyres held up to some serious abuse on Table Mountain, rolled fast, and kept the rubber side down.

The only thing I'd change on the spec is the dual lockout lever for the Fox Suspension. I'd have a handlebar-mounted lever for the fork, and an easy-to-reach shock-mounted lever for the rear shock. This would help to eliminate any slackening in the lockout cables.

Similarly to Merida, Trek has introduced 'Smart Wheel', which sees all Top Fuel frame sizes designed around 29er wheels except for the 15.5" version, which is kitted out with 27.5" hoops and corresponding frame geometry – more comfort for smaller riders.

The Top Fuel was a hard bike to return – a great ride for SA conditions.



TRAIL

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- INCREASED TRAVEL AND SLACKER GEOMETRY
- COMPARED TO NORMAL VIPA
- FITS BOTH 29ER AND 27.5+ WHEELS
- SUPPLIER: MOMSENBIKES.COM

WORLD EXCLUSIVE

MOMSEN VIPA TRAIL ONE

BOOST YOUR RIDE

PRICE R92 500 (ESTIMATED)

A white and black Momsen Vipa Trail One mountain bike is shown from a three-quarter front view. The bike features a trail-oriented frame, a front suspension fork, and a rear shock absorber. It is equipped with 29-inch wheels and a 1x11 drivetrain. The background is a light blue gradient.

While rumours of a brand-new Momsen have been circulating, the PE-based company has kept mum as to what they have up their sleeve – until late last year, when we received an email with the enticing subject line 'Confidential Spy Pics'.

It revealed Momsen's all-new Vipa dual suspension, called the Vipa Trail – a souped-up, trail-slaying version of their popular XC/marathon frameset.

While rear travel has been upped from 80mm to 115mm, and geometry slackened to be more trail-friendly, the most exciting element of the Vipa Trail is its ability to fit either 27.5" x 2.8" or 29" x 2.4" wheels. A few tweaks to the original Vipa make room for 148mm and 110mm front and rear 'Boost' hub spacing.

This top-of-the-range Vipa Trail One will feature a Stan's ZTR Bravo Pro carbon wheelset with Neo Ultimate hubs and a 125mm RockShox Reverb dropper post, as well as SRAM's 1x11 XX1 drivetrain with boost crankset.

WHAT YOU
NEED TO KNOW

- BUILT TO RIDE SINGLETRACK ALL DAY LONG
- GEOMETRY CAN BE FINE-TUNED TO NINE DIFFERENT SETTINGS
- SUPPLIER: HULLABALOO.CO.ZA



ROCKY MOUNTAIN INSTINCT 970 MSL

TRAIL DOMINATION IS ITS BASIC INSTINCT

PRICE R71 684

Born on the hallowed trails of British Columbia, Canada, Rocky Mountain's Instinct 970 MSL is geared for all-day missions where nothing can stand in your way. Down here at the bottom of Africa we may not have the trail network that BC riders enjoy, but thanks to our passionate trail builders, the local trail scene in SA is anything but dormant. Trail centres are opening up new loops and building challenging obstacles, where bikes like the Instinct, with its

130mm of travel, will thrive.

A highlight of the Instinct is what Rocky Mountain call Ride-9. The system allows riders to fine-tune the bike's geometry and suspension rates to best suit their own riding style, weight, and favourite terrain. Engineers have achieved this through two interlocking chips that depending on their configuration can offer a dizzying nine different settings. Other brands have similar technology, but none have gone to the lengths that Rocky Mountain have to

33 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Rocky Mountain have been building mountain bikes since 1982, and they never stop looking for those subtle, yet key ingredients that make riding their bikes fun – each and every time.

offer such finely-tuned adjustment. Settings are split between four primary options, which make the ride characteristics either more efficient, for climbing, or slacker, for better descending; while shock rates can be tuned for lighter or heavier riders.

TRAIL



27.5+

29ers have proved that for many, bigger can be better. 'Plus'-size ups the ante by bringing the volume of your tyres into the equation. 27.5+ bikes are built to handle tyres with volumes of between 2.8" and 3.2", but running on 27.5" rims. This combo essentially means you're riding a 29er with bucketloads more grip, traction and damping (thanks to the higher-volume tyre), which makes trail riding an absolute blast.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- HIGH-VOLUME TYRES DON'T SACRIFICE SPEED → INCREASED GRIP AND CONTROL, WILL.
- HELP BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE
- SUPPLIER: SPECIALIZED.COM

SPECIALIZED FUSE 6FATTIE

ENDOWED WITH CAPABILITY

PRICE R22 999



You wouldn't expect to see a hardtail labelled 'trail', would you? Well, neither did we until we rode the all-new Specialized Fuse, with its 27.5" wheels and massive 3.0" tyres (which puts it firmly in the new '27.5+' segment).

During testing, *Bicycling* was blown away by its capability – the big-volume tyres allowed us to just Guzzle up terrain. Sections of trail usually reserved for longer-travel bikes were destroyed.

The oversized 27.5"x3.0" 6Fattie Ground Control tyres offered superb surface area and damping, which translated into ridiculous amounts of grip and traction on a variety of terrains – especially off-camber and loose, rocky ascents.

We were convinced that the increased rolling resistance would mean snail-like acceleration, making mountains out of molehills. We were wrong; this is not a downsized fatbike with sloppy handling.

What the Fuse and other 27.5+ bikes do is give beginners bucketloads of confidence, without massive penalties from rolling resistance or weight. This is a bike for someone who struggles with technical riding – or just someone looking for a totally new experience, with unimaginable levels of grip.



CANNONDALE HABIT CARBON SE

FULLY FUN-FOCUSED

PRICE R60 000

Cannondale designed the Habit range to fill the gap between their long-travel (160mm), all-mountain Jekyll, and short-travel (100mm), XC/marathon-specific Scalpel platforms.

In South Africa we don't have enough opportunity to hit the sort of massive Alpine-style downhills that require long travel; conversely, not all of us are built

CONTINUE ON PAGE 92



OFFERS JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF PLUSHNESS TO HAVE A TON OF FUN, WHILE STILL CLIMBING LIKE A WEAPON.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- THE HABIT CAN GO ANYWHERE, FAST
- 650B WHEELS MAKE IT SUPER-AGILE AND FUN
- LEFTY 2.0 HAS BEEN BOOSTED TO 130MM
- SUPPLIER: OMNICO.CO.ZA

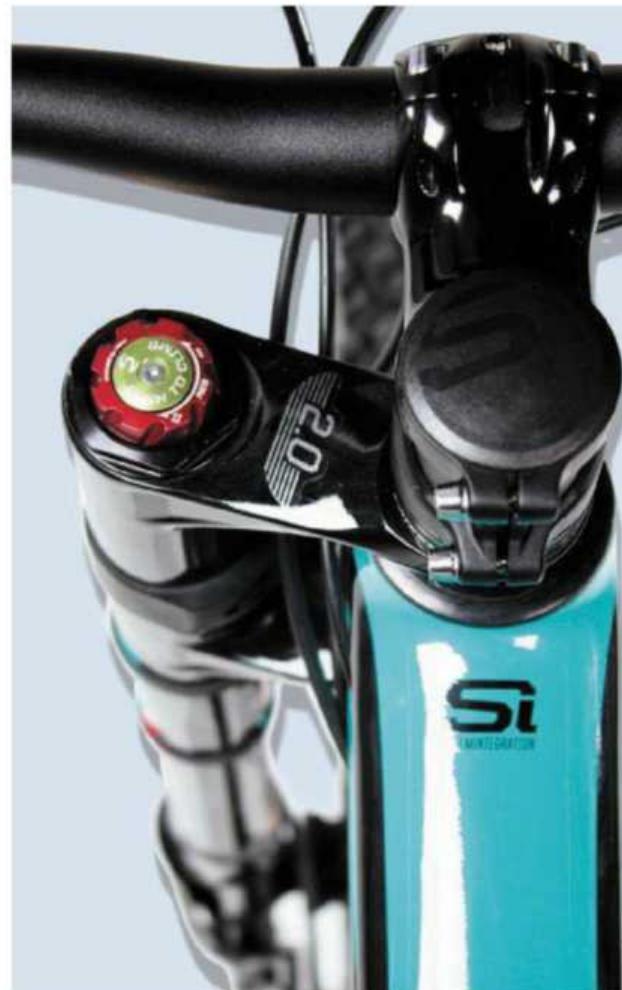
to handle the aggressive geometry of the Scalpel. So the Habit (with its 120mm of rear-end suspension) hits the sweet spot, offering the right amount of plushness to have a ton of fun while still climbing like a weapon. The frame is built around the 27.5" wheelsize, making it better suited to trail parks and those looking for an incredibly lively ride. The 429mm chainstays and 68-degree head angle just strengthen the Habit's trail credentials.

A carbon front end is paired with an alloy swingarm that features pivotless stays. Rather than using traditional linkages, both alloy and carbon swingarms are engineered to flex. This increases rear-end stiffness and reduces weight, meaning the Habit SE frame tips

the scales at under 2 000g.

This SE version sees its Lefty 2.0 Alloy OPI fork raised to 130mm (all other Habits are specced with 120mm versions), slackening the head-angle by half a degree. This means the SE is slightly more capable at handling rougher, more technical terrain than the other models in the range. The iconic Lefty fork is complemented by a RockShox DebonAir RT shock with 120mm of travel, which attaches via a carbon rocker arm weighing just 46g.

An internally-routed LEV Integra dropper post, 2.35" and 2.25" Schwalbe Nobby Nic tyres, SRAM Guide Brakes and a SRAM X1 drivetrain are just some of the spec highlights that will allow you to get the most out of every ride.



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- VERY EASY TO USE AND RECHARGE
- PEDAL ASSIST MAKES LIGHT WORK OF ANY GRADIENT • BETTER SUITED TO OPEN ROADS THAN SINGLETRACK
- SUPPLIER: EVOLUTIONCYCLING.CO.ZA



E-BIKE

HAIBIKE SDURO HARDNINE RC

ELECTRIFYING RIDE

PRICE R49 990

If you think E-bikes are for lazy people, think again. Fitted with electric motors and lithium-ion batteries, E-bikes are about assisting you to pedal rather than doing all the work for you. This isn't a 'free' ride.

Built in Germany, Haibike's Sduro range of pedal-assist E-bikes is specced with 250W Yamaha crank-drive motors that produce 70Nm of torque. In South Africa, E-bikes are only now starting to trickle into the market; but Yamaha have been building E-bike systems since 1993, and have fitted them to over 2.7 million bikes since then.

A handlebar-mounted display

E-BIKES EVERYWHERE

As tech improves, E-bikes are becoming lighter and more agile. Internationally, Haibike offer a dizzying number of pedal-assist bikes, from city cruisers to full-blown downhill bikes with 180mm of suspension.

unit allows you to choose between three assist modes: High, Standard and Eco, each providing a different amount of power or 'assist'. Importantly, the display also shows battery life. If the battery runs out of juice, you can still ride it home under your own steam – but you don't want to get stuck pedalling this heavy machine up a big hill.

Talking of batteries, the Sduro is fitted with a 36v, 400Wh Yamaha lithium-ion battery that takes 3.5 hours to recharge from flat, and allows a range of between 70 and 130km, depending on the terrain you're tackling. We're itching to ride one. Watch this space.

ONLINE GUIDE

FOR A FULL LIST OF THE TOP BIKES OF 2016 VISIT OUR ONLINE BIKE BUYERS GUIDE @ WWW.BICYCLING.CO.ZA/BBG

Ride With Us!

to the Kingdom in the Sky

Lesotho is one of the most unforgiving places in Southern Africa; but in summer after the rains, there's no place more beautiful. A number of pony paths have been upgraded, allowing cyclists access to the wildest parts of the country. Join *Bicycling* on a guided MTB tour to the greenest spaces and widest blue skies you'll ever experience.

THE TEAM

Bicycling's partners in adventure, Dryland Ride and their associates, have over 30 years of experience in the logistical support needed to give you and your family the ride of a lifetime. Our 4x4s will move you, your loved ones and your bicycles into the most beautiful areas without you having to pedal too many steep ascents.

ACCOMMODATION

Guest houses and lodges.

ITINERARY

DAY 1: We meet at a guest farm in Clarence, eastern Free State, an easy half-day drive from Johannesburg or Durban. There is safe parking (the trip finishes here too). Those flying to Johannesburg will be transferred to Clarence for a small fee. We'll get to know each other, and the guides will explain the rest of the trip over a glass of wine and a homecooked meal.

DAY 2: Transfer to the top of Moteng Pass in Lesotho. Then we ride, meandering along the top of the Malutis and dropping down into the Malimabatsu Valley. (The vehicles will be with us all the time, for those who don't want to pedal the total distance.) Short transfer to Katse Dam Lodge, our home for the next two nights, and famous for their trout.

DAY 3: Pedal around sections of magnificent Katse Dam on hardly-used roads, and even on the 185m-high dam wall. En route, our knowledgeable guides will inform you about the Lesotho Highlands Water Project.

DAY 4: Ride out on a contour gravel road above the river feeding Katse Dam, through breathtaking scenery, then transfer to a wonderful descent into the Senqu River Valley. Our next transfer is to the top of Black Mountain Pass, leaving

a 10km ascent to iconic Sani Top Lodge, overlooking KwaZulu-Natal.

DAY 5: After a border crossing, pedal down the awe-inspiring Sani Pass to the little town of Himeville; then transfer back into the Free State and ride through Golden Gate National Park, back to our guest farm in Clarence.

DAY 6: After breakfast we say our goodbyes and go our separate ways. Those with flights to catch will be transferred back to Johannesburg.

COST

R14 450 PP SHARING

R18 785 PP SINGLE

R7 225 CHILD UNDER 12

WHEN

4 TO 9 APRIL 2016

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO BOOK, CONTACT:

Rene 082 855 6015 info@drylandride.co.za www.drylandride.co.za

DRYLAND
Ride

PLEASE NOTE: A valid passport is required for entry into Lesotho. Apply for a passport at the Department of Home Affairs, preferably at least six weeks in advance. Travel regulations for minors have changed – specific travel documentation from the Office of Home Affairs may be required.

RACE DIARY

[Featured Race](#) | [Race Calendar](#) | [Recommended Races](#)

EDITED BY ANDRÉ VALENTINE

FAIRVIEW ATTAKWAS EXTREME MTB CHALLENGE

► EPIC TESTER

If you've entered the Absa Cape Epic, then this is the perfect event to see if your training has paid off. The race organisers refer to it as the 'Comrades of mountain biking', and the water points have consistently been rated the best in SA. For a shorter [but not to be underestimated] challenge, there's also the 52km Atta Mini.

The course is challenging, but doable – if you've put in time in the saddle [as you've been doing for the Epic, right?]. The 121km crosses some amazing landscapes, from Chandelier game farm through the gnarly Attakwaskloof, followed by some big, rolling hills on district road. The Mini starts and finishes at Great Brak, just in time to welcome the war heroes who have conquered the long route.

121KM [EXTREME], 56KM [MINI], CHANDELIER GAME FARM, OUDTSHOORN



SUPPLIED



ALL NIGHT LONG
24 Hours of Oak Valley,
one part race, one part
camping, all about a
good time.

THE RACE CALENDAR IS COMPILED TWO MONTHS IN ADVANCE. FOR THE MOST UP-TO-DATE RACE DETAILS, VISIT WWW.BICYCLING.CO.ZA/CALENDAR

WESTERN CAPE

MTB

16 JANUARY

FAIRVIEW ATTAKWAS EXTREME MTB CHALLENGE

12km (Extreme), 56km (Mini)
Chandelier Game Farm, Oudtshoorn
Contact Dryland Event Management
info@dryland.co.za, 044 279 1013
Web and Online Entries atta.co.za

23-24 JANUARY

24 HOURS OF OAK VALLEY: MTB RELAY

Oak Valley Estate, Elgin Valley,
Grabouw
Contact Dirtopia 021 884 4752
Web and Online Entries dirtopia.co.za

MPUMALANGA

MULTI-STAGE

18-23 JANUARY

THE MPUMALANGA TOUR

749km (6 days, 6 stages)
Loskopdam, a FOREVER Resort
Contact Ansie de Jager
ansie@hatoere.co.za, 083 411 2480
Web hatoere.co.za
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za

MTB

30 JANUARY

BARBERTON XCM

110km, 77km, 48km, 30km, 20km
Barberton High School

Contact Race Office
info@barbertonxcm.co.za,
082 455 1765
Web barbertonxcm.co.za
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za

ROAD

24 JANUARY

PREMIER CYCLE EVENT ELITE CRITERIUM

80km, 40km, 20km
Halls Farm Stall, Nelspruit
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za

GAUTENG

MTB

10 JANUARY

SUMMER FAST ONE MTB

65km, 40km, 10km
Smoking Wheels
(opposite new Mall of the South),
Johannesburg
Contact Race Office 083 434 3515,
016 982 6060
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za

ROAD

31 JANUARY

VALUE LOGISTICS FAST ONE

96km, 49km
Midvala Raceway, Meyerton
Entries close 19 January 2016 at 23:00
Contact Race Office
info@thefastone.org
Web thefastone.org
Online Entries cycleevents.co.za

KWAZULU-NATAL

MTB

23-24 JANUARY

EUROSTEEL DRAK DESCENT

85km
Drak Gardens, Umzimkulu River

Contact Bruce Hansen

bahanse@telkomza.net, 033 701 2766

Web drak.co.za

Online Entries roag.co.za

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OR ADMINISTERING A SPORT EVENT.**



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YOUR GUIDE TO THE BEST IN CYCLING FOR JANUARY



WESTERN CAPE
24 HOURS OF OAK VALLEY
23-24 JANUARY

This 24-hour format event is unique,

because the distance you cover is totally up to you: just ride as far as you can in 24 hours. A 10km loop of Oak Valley is your battlefield for this one, and you can choose to enter a fun relay team of five to eight riders, a racing team of four riders, or (bravely) as a solo rider. Conditions change throughout the event as the track erodes, and riding through the night adds a totally different dimension. There's a campsite as well, which makes this a great event for the whole family. For more info, visit dirtopia.co.za.

– Renay Groustra



FREE STATE
BARBERTON XCM CHALLENGE
30 JANUARY

The traditional MTB season-opener in

Mpumalanga is always a solid favourite. In 2016, the event will be better than ever, and is perfectly placed to act as a pre-Absa Cape Epic fitness test. There are a host of categories for everyone in the family, from the 'very delicate' 20km fun ride to the 'delicate' 30km half marathon, to the 'not so delicate' 48km half marathon, to the 'very not so delicate' 77km full marathon, to the 'decidedly undelicate' 110km ultra.

Find out more at barbertonxcm.co.za.
 – Nic White



KWAZULU-NATAL
THE EUROSTEEL DRAK DESCENT
23-24 JANUARY

This two-day event starts at the

Gooderson Drak gardens and ends at the Umzimkulu River Lodge. The route mainly follows the Umzimkulu River and its tributaries, treating riders to some great singletrack and some challenging sections along the way. Although many consider this a leisurely ride, it will certainly attract some competition from the racing snakes. The R1 000 entry fee is considered cheap for a stage race of this quality, so spoil yourself and start your season with a bang. For more information, go to drak.co.za.

– Bryan Powell



DRAGON BACKDROP
 The Eurosteel Drak Descent promises fast, flowing singletrack, and an early test of your post-holiday skills.



Rate Your Race

See what others thought about your last race – plus, your feedback means an improved race next year!

Head to www.bicycling.co.za/past-races to rate and review your races.

THE FRAME

► REAL IMAGES FROM REAL RIDERS



SUBMITTED BY TOUR OF ARA | PHOTOGRAPH RICHARD JOHNSON

THE TOUR OF ARA IS A SIX-DAY, ALL-GRAVEL STAGE RACE, RIDDEN EXCLUSIVELY ON VINTAGE SOUTH AFRICAN ROAD BIKES – AND THIS YEAR, PASSING THROUGH THE PICTURESQUE CEDERBERG AND HARSH KAROO. HERE MISHAQ DIESEL, ONE OF ONLY TWO RIDERS WHO RODE A FIXED-GEAR BIKE, WARMS UP FOR THE FIFTH STAGE, WITH EXTREME COLD PREDICTED FOR THE 100KM TRIP.

► Share your good times with us on Instagram. Tag @Bicycling_SA with your ride photos and next time it could be your pic featured in an upcoming issue! (Remember to mention where the shot was taken!)



NOBODY PUTS CAMBER IN THE CORNER

Nothing should be defined by what it isn't. Not big enough, not small enough—whatever. The Camber is just fine where it is. It's the ultimate speed-loving trail bike, after all. So bring this magazine with you on your next ride—you're going to need some reading material while you're waiting for your buddies at the top and bottom of the trail this weekend. specialized.com/camber



▼ NINO SCHURTER



NO SHORTCUTS

It's not just what you see the moment you need to be at your best, it's that you were passionate enough to spend years of moments chewing up dirt to get there.

NINO SCHURTER
2015 WORLD CHAMPION
& WORLD CUP CHAMPION